

THE INDEPENDENT



Bath vs Wigan: the clash of two cultures

A match across the North-South divide

INSIDE TODAY'S SECTION TWO

How to spot the car that's clocked

On the road

Meet pop music's Tony Hancock

Why Robert Smith is glad to be glum

EU poll backs Major view as seats tumble

Voters split on single currency

DONALD MACINTYRE
Political Editor

John Major's strategy of leaving open the issue of a single currency has been vindicated by confidential new poll findings which show that voters are in two minds about European monetary union.

The research shows that while 71 per cent would vote against joining monetary union in a referendum now, 69 per cent would consider the possibility of joining later if the issue were left open.

The poll will bring some comfort to the Tory high command in the wake of last night's heavy losses in the local elections. It shows a large majority of voters want to retain the possibility of joining a single currency some time in the future.

The unpublished poll for the European Commission shows that 71 per cent would vote against joining monetary union in a referendum – a markedly higher figure than the 58 per cent recorded in a MORI poll for the *Sun* newspaper earlier this week.

The findings, which are now circulating in Whitehall, help to explain the confidence with which the Prime Minister said on Monday that a referendum would vote against a single currency if it were held today.

But pro-Europeans will take considerably more comfort from the surprise finding that more than two-thirds answer 'yes' to the question of whether a 'decision should be left open with the possibility of joining later'.

The finding that 69 per cent – compared with 56 per cent last June – of electors want the op-

tion kept open will be seen as suggesting that a referendum on a government proposal to join a single currency could still be winnable – particularly if the decision was taken to join as part of a 'second wave' once European monetary union has been in operation for a period.

A number of ministers, including Stephen Dorrell, the Secretary of State for Health, have been arguing in private that Britain is much likelier to join a single currency in the second wave and it would be more desirable for it to do so, if it joins at all.

The poll also shows that British electors are remarkably unsentimental about the issue of whether the Queen's head should on one side of the planned euro notes and coins if the UK joins a single currency. While 13 per cent say it would make them more favourably inclined towards a single currency and 5 per cent less so, 82 per cent say it would make no difference.

The unexpectedly deep vein of hostility will encourage Euro-sceptics who have been stepping up the pressure on Mr Major over the past few weeks, culminating in a strong hint that members of the right-wing 92 Group will include personal commitments not to support a single currency in their election addresses.

But it also shows that Mr Major's determination not to yield to pressure and rule out a single currency has equally enthusiastic support from voters, which comes as a fillip after a miserable local election campaign which has been overshadowed by the party's divisions over Europe.

Now you are a councillor, page 17

Wimpy puts British beef on menu

WILL BENNETT
and COLIN BROWN

Farmers received some rare good news yesterday when the Wimpy fast-food chain said it would put British beef back on the menu. It was removed after the start of the BSE ('mad-cow') crisis five weeks ago.

But the Government culling scheme, designed to restore faith in British beef, failed to get under way yesterday, with farmers and slaughterhouse operators accusing ministers of presiding over a farce. Destruction of 21,000 cattle a week as part of efforts to eradicate BSE from British herds had been due to start yesterday

after being postponed from Monday. Confusion over the scheme to remove animals aged over 30 months from the food chain led to allegations in the Commons yesterday that the ban was inept.

Tony Blair, the Labour leader, said the measures, introduced by Douglas Hogg, the Agriculture Minister, had led to confusion and appeared 'pretendingly inept'.

John Major said detailed information would be sent today to farmers, but Labour leaders said the confusion increased the impression of the Government having lost its grip in the crisis. In an attempt to reassure his authority, Mr Major yesterday

signalled that the Government was considering a show of anger by calling in ambassadors of European Union countries to protest if the EU refuses to lift the export ban on British beef.

Welcoming the move by Wimpy, Mr Major told MPs he would consider the call by Sir Crispin O'Connor – one of the Tory MPs who sent a joint protest to the ambassadors on Wednesday – for the diplomats to be called in to bear British protests if the ban were not lifted next week.

Ministers said last night there would be intolerable pressure on the Government if the meeting of agriculture ministers on Tuesday failed to lift the ban.

There would be overwhelming expectations of action, and calling in the ambassadors would have widespread support.

Cabinet ministers reviewed possible action at a short meeting but Cabinet sources said there would be no 'marching up the hill' again with renewed threats of counter-measures after the debate last week.

Ministers appear to feel frustrated at their impotence, and the British action in the European Court is not seen as a quick remedy.

Peter Gentry, who runs Britain's second-largest prime beef cattle market at Newark, Nottinghamshire, said the culling scheme was 'an ab-

solute farce. We have no idea what is going on. I have no starting date for the scheme. I am bailing over backwards to try and understand the logistics of this scheme.'

'We have no idea of how we are going to be paid. We have no idea of how we are going to be able to pay the producer. It is just a monumental cock-up.'

Peter Bowyer, a slaughterhouse operator from Fatherleigh, near Okehampton, Devon, said: 'This has been mismanaged. Nobody seems to know what is going on... We are ready

to slaughter 400-500 cattle a day but cannot do anything until we know there is somewhere for the carcasses to go.'

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Howard furious at Bulger ruling

HEATHER MILLS
Home Affairs Correspondent

The Home Office may be forced to review the detention of up to 230 young killers after the High Court yesterday outlawed the 15-year minimum sentences imposed by Michael Howard on the schoolboys who killed toddler James Bulger.

The Home Secretary reacted furiously to his latest rebuff by the judiciary, threatening legislation 'to protect the supreme power of Parliament to shape the law', and announcing an appeal against what he described as a 'quite remarkable' judgment.

Jamie Bulger's distraught mother, Denise, said she would devote her life to ensuring the

two boys stayed in detention. 'I don't think his decision was unlawful – in fact I don't think they should get out at all,' she said. 'They did an adult crime and they should be treated like adults. If they don't have to serve the 15 years, as far as I am concerned they are getting off with it. It will just have been like a little holiday for them.'

But children's and civil rights groups hailed the judgment – which outlawed the fixing of a 'tariff' or minimum sentence for child offenders – as a return to the concept of 'juvenile justice'. Britain stands almost alone in treating child offenders as young as 10 as if they were adults.

In fact, the ruling will not



Michael Howard: Humiliated

necessarily mean that the two boys, Robert Thompson and Jon Venables, are released any earlier. It means only that their detention must be regularly reviewed. Read alongside a deci-

sion by European human rights judges earlier this year, that recommended that they should serve a minimum eight-year 'tariff' – the proportion of their sentence which reflects punishment and deterrence, before they can be considered for parole. Lord Taylor, the Lord Chief Justice recommended a 10-year tariff, but the Home Secretary, who makes the final decision, ruled that it should be 15 years.

The two boys were just 10 years old when they abducted two-year-old Jamie from a shopping precinct in 1993 and killed him on an isolated railway line in Walton, Liverpool.

They were sentenced 'to be detained at her Majesty's Pleasure' – the indeterminate and compulsory sentence for juvenile killers. The trial judge, Mr

Justice Morland, recommended that they should serve a minimum eight-year 'tariff' – the proportion of their sentence which reflects punishment and deterrence, before they can be considered for parole. Lord Taylor, the Lord Chief Justice recommended a 10-year tariff, but the Home Secretary, who makes the final decision, ruled that it should be 15 years.

But Lord Justice Pill, sitting with Mr Justice Newman, said yesterday that the Home Secretary had adopted 'an unlawful practice' by treating the boys in the same way as adult murderers serving life sentences.

He said Mr Howard had every right to take an initial view

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news

Questionable performance by the Diva from Hell



DAVID AARONOVITCH

This is a story of a row. Not a row as in fight or struggle - but a row of seats. To be precise the third row up, below the gangway on the government side of the Chamber. And it's a story of the men who sit there.

At 2.30 yesterday there were only a couple of bottoms parked on this row - the least of which belonged to the MP for Gravesend, Jacques Arnold. But why was he there at all? This was Northern Ireland questions and more sensible folk like before the various factions and their mainland sympathisers get stuck in. My own theory is that he has an arrange-

ment with David Mellor, whereby one remains in the House whenever the other is absent. As a consequence, Mr Arnold is never able to get away. Which is a shame for a man who lists only recreation as "Family".

A former junior minister,

Mr Arnold is too modest. He has at least two other hobbies - asking questions and shouting. Both of which allow him to employ his most notable attribute - his remarkable voice. This sounds like an adenoidal buzz saw with gears. In first it emits a whine which can scare slugs off lettuce at 200 yards. In higher gears his voice becomes inescapable and unbearable - like a showstopping aria by the Diva from Hell.

At 3.07pm, Mr Arnold was called to ask a question. On the order paper it was supposed to be about the flying over Irish police stations. North and South,

of Union flags and tricolours. But, putting the saw into second, Mr Arnold contrived this: "Has the minister received any request to fly the European flag over RUC stations?" This was greeted by one of those guffaws that passes for amusement in the House, and he sat down with a satisfied smile.

By now, with Prime Minister's questions fast approaching, bench three was filling up. Two along was old Etonian Sir Archie Hamilton, former PPS to Mrs Thatcher in the Glory Days, and now consigned to the backbenches - his long and thickening form slumped la-

guidly on the upholstery, alternately yawning and heckling Opposition women MPs.

On his right sat Richard Tracey, JP MP (Surbiton). Co-author of "Hickshead: the first twelve years", Mr Tracey's moment came in the mid-eighties when he was Minister of Sport. And then it went again. He has a large face, but rather tiny features which perch almost arbitrarily somewhere near the middle. It reminds one of a map of Saskatchewan or Alberta, where huge expanses of Canadian prairie are punctuated by small conurbations, placed there for no obvious reason.

Richard kept bobbing up and trying to catch the Speaker's eye almost as though he had fallen asleep, but had forgotten to tell his legs. Archie and Jacques heckled the rather pathetic attempt by Labour's Bridget Prentice (Lewisham E) to flog the dead horse of a Heseltine leadership challenge, but their hearts weren't in it.

Four o'clock and all three were still there, whence by now nearly all, but they had fled. Three ex-ministers, seventeen years into the Conservative era, desultorily interrupting the shadow leader of the House, Ann Taylor from bench three. Waiting.

IN BRIEF

GP's daughter killed with boyfriend

A doctor's daughter and her boyfriend were found brutally murdered in a country bungalow yesterday. Fiona Ovis, 28, and William Crompton, 18, had been killed in a knife attack.

Fiona and William were found at the £80,000 home at Landrindod Wells in Mid Wales, which was owned by her late grandparents. The dead woman's recently retired father, Dr Simeon Ovis, had been trying to sell the bungalow, but it is believed his daughter had a key. A 26-year-old man was last night being questioned by Dyfed-Powys police.

Lifting the lid

Researchers began lifting the lid on Britain's rubbish bins yesterday as part of a project to find out how much waste packaging is thrown out. Trash from more than 2,000 homes will be analysed and the results used to help formulate recovery and recycling programmes. The Government is urging packaging manufacturers to increase the recovery of the waste.

Library thief jailed

A landscape gardener who toured the country stealing rare prints from library books has been jailed for four years at Southwark Crown Court in London. Joseph Bellwood, 43, of Swillington, Leeds, admitted stealing plates worth £120,000 and selling them for £17,000.

Star turns

ITV is to use stars from some of its most successful programmes to promote less popular shows. Bill Tarmey and Les Dawson, who play Jack and Vera Duckworth in *Coronation Street* will help advertise Melvyn Bragg's arts programme, *The South Bank Show*.

Life sentence

A jealous man who murdered his ex-wife when he discovered she was having an affair with his long lost son was jailed for life at Winchester Crown Court. Charles Hansoo, 48, of East Dulwich, London, stabbed Julie Dalton with a 10-inch knife in front of Neil Mason, 23, his son from a previous marriage. He had denied murder.

Editors warned

Newspaper editors and photographers were given a warning last night after the recent publication of pictures showing Prince William at Eton. Lord Wakeham, the chairman of the Press Complaints Commission, said: "Just recently there have been one or two instances where reporting - in terms of the publication of photographs taken of William during his time at school - has begun to stray into grey areas around the dividing line between the freedom of the press and its duty to respect the privacy of a child."

Soldier ambushed

Six men were being questioned by police last night after an army despatch rider was ambushed as he travelled on a minor road near Heddle-on-the-Wall, Northumberland. The soldier, from 8 Regiment Royal Logistic Corps, was left stranded when the raiders made off with his 350cc Harley Davidson and unloaded automatic rifle.

£350,000 rail sale

A toy train set broke all records last night when it sold for almost £350,000 in an auction at Christie's in London. Collectors from around the world bid for more than 300 items, including locomotives, freight wagons and stations, sold by the set's anonymous Swiss owner.

Family reunion

Hill Seventies family band, The Jackson Five, are set to re-form to record and tour. It was claimed yesterday. Elder brother Tito Jackson said the plans included the American group's most famous member, Michael.

DJ smuggled drugs

A disc jockey was jailed for two years yesterday for smuggling £15,000 worth of drugs into Britain. Stephen Smith, 30, of the London-based radio station Kiss FM, had denied smuggling 5.16kg of berber cannabis through Dover, Kent, in October 1994 but was convicted at Canterbury Crown Court.

THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

Austria	... 5,940	Wales	... 8,600
Belgium	... 2,960	Italy	... 14,500
Canada	... 5,600	Malta	... 8,225
Cyprus	... 1,120	Malta	... 43,000
Denmark	... 1,020	Norway	... 16,200
Irish Free	... 450	Portugal	... 8,625
France	... 14,940	Sweden	... 56,000
Germany	... 14,940	Switzerland	... 84,000
Greece	... 1,450	USA	... 83,000

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•Spot the
JAMES CAGNEY

Advisers got £34m for pits sell-off

CHRIS BLACKHURST
Westminster Correspondent

The controversial sale of British Coal's pits to RJB Mining, the company controlled by entrepreneur Richard Budge, in 1994, cost the taxpayer £34m in advisers' fees, according to an official report published today.

Of that total, says the National Audit Office study, the bulk went to just three City firms. Rothschilds, the merchant bank, was paid £9.1m; Clifford Chance, the law firm, picked up £12.7m and Touche Ross, the accountants, received £4.3m. Dewe Rogerson, the City public relations agency, was paid £320,000.

The sale provoked an outcry for two main reasons. At the same time as the deal was being struck, Mr Budge was being investigated by another branch of government to see if he should be disqualified as a director over his involvement in another business venture.

Lord Wakeham, the minister responsible for appointing Rothschilds, also caused a furor who he joined the bank after leaving the Government.

On the row over Mr Budge, that Department of Trade and Industry officials talking to him about selling the pits had no idea he was also being looked at by the DTI's Insolvency Service. In the end, they decided not to apply for his disqualification but, says the NAO, "any such application could have had a significant impact on RJB Mining's bid".



Kind thought: Dumbane children choose some of the 5,000 Teddy bears sent to the city after the school shooting

Photograph: Crawford Brown

Bulger ruling follows judges' trend

A series of recent rulings have helped keep politicians out of determining sentences, writes Heather Mills

Yesterday's court defeat for Michael Howard is the latest advance by the judges in keeping politicians out of determining individual sentences.

A series of rulings by European and English judges eroding the role of the executive, means that the Home Secretary now retains only the right to decide if and when murderers serving mandatory life sentences should be freed.

Yesterday's High Court decision, coupled with a ruling by human rights judges in Strasbourg earlier this year, effectively removes any role for the Home Secretary in fixing penalties for the 230 children and young people detained indefinitely "during her majesty's pleasure" for serious offences.

In February, a unanimous decision by the European Court of Human Rights swept away the powers of the Home Secretary to decide whether or not to release young murderers once a "tariff", or minimum term, set by the Home Secretary had expired. They said their release should be decided by a "court-like body" which regularly reviewed their detention.

The two English judges' decision yesterday to declare "tariffs" illegal - saying that children should not be treated as adults - will leave the entire process in the hands of the independent tribunal, like the Parole Board.

In 1990 another European Court ruling abolished Mr Howard's powers to decide on the release dates for those serving

executive involvement when it comes to children's rights and justice. Mr Howard would face some cross-party opposition in the Commons - and outwith the Lords, which is in favour of abolishing the mandatory life sentence for murder all together.

As it is, the UK is out of step with Europe in the way that it deals with child offenders. Most countries have set the age of criminality as low as 10. While yesterday's ruling was seen by lawyers and children's groups as a step towards a return to the concept of "juvenile justice", they argue that the government is not the surest guide in making such a decision".

These words should ring alarm bells with Mr Howard before he proceeds with his threat yesterday to change the law relating to child killers if he fails - as likely - in his appeals against yesterday's decision.

MPs will be even more emphatic in their opposition to executive involvement when it comes to children's rights and justice. Mr Howard would face some cross-party opposition in the Commons - and outwith the Lords, which is in favour of abolishing the mandatory life sentence for murder all together.

Justice in its recent report on child killers, suggests raising the age of criminality to 14, claims that a public trial is inappropriate for those under 14, and recommends that an independent court-like body responsible for deciding their release date should review their detention every year.

As

they were an adult," he said.

The judge said he recognised the Home Secretary's responsibility - along with that of the judges - to maintain public confidence in the system of criminal justice. "Public revulsion at this offence is so great that it must be dealt with firmly and effectively," he said.

What I cannot accept is that in the case of an offender aged 10 or 11, he can fix a tariff of 15 years as if the offend-

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er was an adult," he said.

Spot the difference: Doctors given a twin-track solution

JAMES CUSICK

They came two by two. And they just kept coming. So many were there that passers-by on nearby Westminster Bridge might have been suspected the sudden onset of double vision.

In fact, although no eye tests were necessary, the presence of 500 sets of female twins enjoying a party in their honour at St Thomas's Hospital yesterday might ultimately help the visually impaired – as well as those suffering from a range of other medical conditions.

The hospital's Twin Research Unit, set up in 1992, has attempted to explain the role of genetics in many common diseases of ageing – notably osteoporosis and osteoarthritis – by examining the DNA of people born from the same egg.

Wise to the commercial possibilities of the project, which could help thousands, a private firm, Gemini Research, has already backed it to the tune of £1m. So successful have been the initial results that 5,000 pairs of twins are to be recruited for the next phase.

Gemini, and Dr Tim Spector, who leads the research, hope the data collected will enable doctors to predict which patients are most susceptible to diabetes, asthma, cardiovascular disease, back pain, skin ailments, deafness and obesity, as well as bone disorders. A "pill in a bottle" cure may be many years away, says Dr Spector, but his findings have already helped establish a link between osteoporosis – a disease which costs the NHS £750m a year – and an individual's ability to absorb vitamin D.

While this aspect of the project has already paid dividends, Dr Spector admits no new light has been shed on the phenomenon of twinning itself. "We still don't know precisely why this occurs. But we do know that twins are more likely to give birth to twins."

When asked whether they had learned anything about themselves through the testing programme, new recruit Susie Gibbons and her non-identical twin, Hillary Clever (both 26, identically dressed and apparently able to read each other's thoughts) replied in unison: "No – but we had a lot of fun."

Leading article, page 16



Photograph: Philip Meech

Double-take: The 500 sets of twins at St Thomas's Hospital, London, yesterday. The project now aims to extend its research to a sample group 10 times as large

News Corp to sue over 'inflated' smart card costs

PETER RODGERS
Business Editor

Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation said yesterday it is to press ahead with a claim for £19m in damages from suppliers of "smart cards" to BSkyB. It claims it was outsmarted for some years by the supplier of its cards, who used a highly secure encryption technology invented in Israel.

The electronic smart cards are at the heart of the business of BSkyB and other television operations in which News Corp is involved. They are the key that unlocks satellite TV programmes for subscribers and only viewers with cards can gain access.

The suppliers are alleged to have artificially inflated the price of the cards charged to News Corp, and split some of

the excess profits between a number of individuals.

The defendants in the action, in which News Corp alleges a conspiracy, include former executives of subsidiaries of News Corp.

Among these subsidiaries is News Datacom, the group's conduit for the supply of smart cards to its satellite television associates.

Arthur Siskind, a New York-based director of News Corp and the company's general counsel, said the action in London involved individuals and companies no longer connected with the group. "We believe the problem has been remedied. What we are seeking is redress for the damages that have been done."

He said the main problem News Corp faced, its vulnerability to a single supplier of



Rupert Murdoch: Claiming damages of £19m

smart cards, had been overcome, there were now several sources and prices had fallen.

Ian Rosenblatt, a London solicitor representing Bharat Ku-

mar Maya, a California businessman, and several of his associated companies which are defendants in the case, said: "There are questionable motives for this litigation and we are defending it vigorously. We deny any conspiracy." The case is not expected to come to court until next year.

Mr Rosenblatt rejected an allegation in News Corp's writ that PMI, an offshore company that supplied smart cards to News Corp, was 40 per cent owned by the Maya companies.

The writs allege that PMI was a conduit for some of the excess profits earned in selling the smart cards at inflated prices to News Corp. The alleged conspiracy also included obstruction of the media company's attempts to diversify its supply of smart cards.

News Corp also alleged that

difficulties in the management of News Datacom between 1987 and 1992 were caused by the "unauthorised acts of certain of the defendants who are the subject of the lawsuit. News Corporation reaffirms its complete faith in the current management of News Datacom."

A spokesman for News Corp rejected related allegations in the *Financial Times* that the company had indulged in "questionable tax planning" to minimise tax bills in the UK and Israel, where the smart card technology came from.

He said the company had "fully complied with its obligations under all tax laws to which it is subject. In particular, the company's Israeli subsidiary, since its inception, has had accumulated losses and, as a consequence, has not incurred income tax liability in Israel."

Grass isn't always greener for water firm

PETER VICTOR

Severn Trent Water has come up with a foolproof way for keen gardeners to conserve water this summer – pave over their lawns with concrete slabs.

The water company, which imposed a six-month hosepipe ban on its 3 million customers and made a profit of £238m last year, is also advising gardeners that they could make their lawns smaller by increasing the size of flower borders or leave grass clippings on the ground to keep lawns looking greener.

Other ideas in a leaflet sent to households across the Midlands include leaving grass growing longer and saving rain water.

Labour MP Robin Corbett, whose Birmingham Erdington constituency is covered by Severn Trent, described the ideas as "crackpot". He said: "I have never heard of anything so ludicrous. They would do better to conserve water by stopping the water leakages they are responsible for. They are ones responsible for the huge loss of water – not the customers."

The leaflet tells gardeners: "Tradition dictates that we have a lawn – but do we really need one? Why not increase the size of your borders or replace lawned areas with paving stones or gravel?"

A spokesman for Severn Trent said the leaflet had been written to help gardeners prepare for a summer drought. He said replacing lawns with paving was just one solution to drought problems and other advice included what plants to use and to collect rain water in a bucket.

The spokesman said the

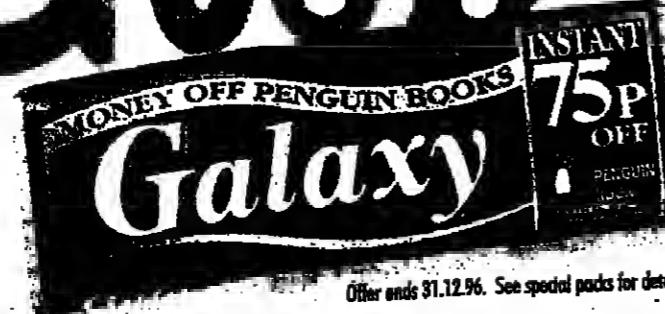
leaflet, which was launched last week, had the backing of gardener and broadcaster Anne Swithinbank, who appears on Radio 4's *Gardeners' Question Time*. "It is our way of building bridges to gardeners who coped very well with us last summer when we had the drought."

A spokesman for the water industry regulator, Ofwat, said it welcomed customers being responsible about water conservation but did not want gardeners to think they had to pave over their lawns.

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4 news

Ofsted chief in fresh row over

FRAN ABRAMS
Education Correspondent

New accusations of political bias were levelled at the Chief Inspector of Schools last night after the leaking of a critical report on reading standards in three London boroughs.

The report, due to be published by the school inspection body, Ofsted, next week, is believed to say that almost eight out of 10 seven-year-olds in Islington, Tower Hamlets and Southwark have reading ages below their actual age. It is expected to add that head teachers show "insufficient leadership" in one in three schools and that teachers are held back by a lack of knowledge and training.

The report is also likely to say that time devoted to reading is not always used to good effect.

Last night the three author-

ities said the final version of the report had been altered and that an earlier draft had more praise for the work of teachers. A paragraph emphasising the exceptional demands made on teachers by pupils from deprived backgrounds and with special needs appeared to have been deleted, they said. One sentence which had said that two-thirds of lessons were satisfactory had been altered to say that one-third was unsatisfactory.

Mr Woodhead has repeatedly been accused of right-wing political bias. Last year he wrote a pamphlet for a right-wing think tank, Policy, which questioned the future role of local education authorities. He also suggested on a television programme that 15,000 inadequate teachers should be sacked, prompting protests that he had failed to mention the 45,000 who were outstandingly good.

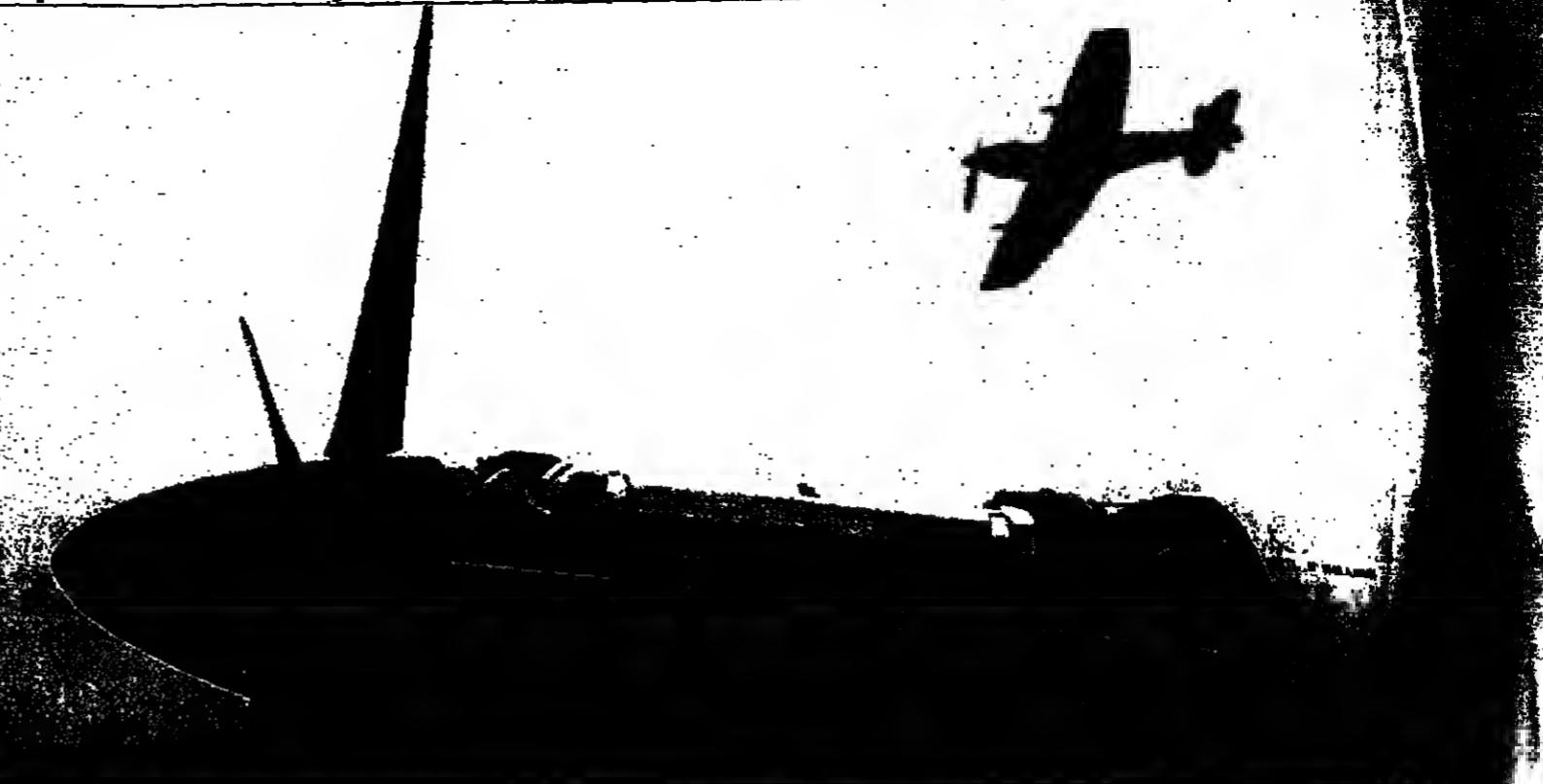
The plan to inspect reading in the three boroughs was announced by John Major last September. The three boroughs selected agreed to allow Ofsted inspectors into 45 primary schools on the understanding that it was meant to draw attention to good practice. Last night they claimed it had been hijacked for political ends.

Phil Kelly, chairman of education in Islington, said: "The report has been drafted to emphasise problems in teachers' skills and teachers' leadership. The slanting of the report in this way is clearly intended to cater to the prejudices of Mr Woodhead's political masters."

Anne Worley, chairman of education in Southwark, added: "The draft of the report has clearly been altered at the instigation of the chief inspector."

A spokesman for Ofsted defended the report but refused to confirm the details.

Spitfire diamond jubilee: Fighters gather to remember the few who saved a



Flight of fancy: A Spitfire flies over Duxford airfield in Cambridgeshire where the biggest gathering of the aircraft since the Second World War is due to take place on Bank Holiday Monday. Twenty five of the fighters will take part in the Spitfire Diamond Jubilee Air Show. PHILIPPE HUGUET

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Cancer patients tell of callousness

Cancer patients speak out frankly today about their treatment in a unique report documenting their experiences. Many say they are not given enough information and want more honesty from the doctors dealing with them.

The study involves people from four regions of England, all of whom say they had not received enough information, and some information was deliberately withheld. The doctor was considered the best person to provide information.

Patients wanted to know about diagnostic procedures to avoid fear and upset from lack of understanding of what to expect. They also expected information on procedures and potential success rates, side-e-

ffects, post-treatment symptoms and all aspects of living with cancer. Many patients reported that the attitude of health professionals prevented them developing an effective working relationship.

Cancer patients wanted to be treated with respect for their personal dignity and as people with individual needs - not as a tumour to be processed. Patients came up with repeated examples of thoughtlessness or callous behaviour at the point of diagnosis. A woman recalled: "He said 'It's not looking good, we will have to have your right breast removed tomorrow', and that was it; he walked out and that was the only thing I knew. It took 20 seconds and he never mentioned cancer."

Meteorites prompt a rash of UFO 'sightings'

A huge meteorite shower in the skies over Scotland and Northern Ireland sparked hundreds of calls from worried onlookers reporting UFOs, weather forecasters said yesterday.

Police and coastguards between Stormont and Glasgow were inundated with calls when the spectacular light display started shortly after 10pm on Wednesday night.

Meteorologists were yesterday investigating the reports, but could not say if more meteorites would be visible. Witnesses spoke of seeing bright lights

darting west to east, leaving vapour trails behind them.

A Glasgow Weather Centre spokesman said: "We certainly took a lot of calls ... because when people see an unusual light in the sky they immediately think of UFOs."

"Apparently it was a very large and very bright shower which was visible over much of the country. It would have been quite spectacular."

Reports of the shower came from the Western Isles, Strathclyde and over to Ulster until early yesterday.

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Nadir give
condition
for his retu

Bankside project: Scheme to transform derelict site into centre for arts takes major leap



Picture place: Nicholas Serota, director of the Tate, checks out Bankside, the gallery's new £12m acquisition

Photograph: Philip Meech

Mr patient
rallous

Joy for Tate as £12m gift buys power house

Bankside power station, which is being turned into a major cultural centre, has been bought for the Tate Gallery for £12m by the regenerative agency English Partnerships, it was announced yesterday.

The Tate has also gained planning permission from Southwark council for its plans to transform the striking building on the south bank of the river Thames to Looeoo, Tate director Nicholas Serota said.

English Partnerships' money goes to Magnox plc, the publicly owned section of the nuclear industry which owns the site and is decommissioning it.

Mr Serota said: "This investment will help turn a derelict site at the heart of the capital into a major cultural, social and economic asset for Southwark and the nation."

The project was also recently awarded a £50m grant by the National Lottery-backed Millennium Commission, and it is hoped to open it in 2000.

The Tate Gallery must find the rest of the estimated total of £100m cost from other sources. Mr Serota said remaining money had to be found by February next year.

But he added: "I can assure you that we have a large number of commitments and we are making really excellent progress in getting that money and are well on our way to reaching that £50m."

Yesterday's £12m regeneration grant was the first part of that, said English Partnerships' chief executive, David Taylor, said the grant was unconditional.

"This investment will help turn this redundant and derelict building into a major national landmark," he said.

"It will create up to 1,000 new jobs for people in Southwark and will promote the broader regeneration of the area."

It was the first time, perhaps in Europe, that a former power station had been reclaimed for new use, he said.

The Department of Environment had spent millions decommissioning old power stations, as had the Department of Energy and CEGE after it, he said.

Magnox Electric chairman Mark Baker said: "Not only will Bankside get continued life as a valuable public asset; the taxpayer has benefited too."

Nadir gives conditions for his return

JOHN WILLCOCK

Asil Nadir, the former Polly Peck boss who fled to Northern Cyprus while facing fraud charges, yesterday said he would return to face trial only if a new government were elected and key regulatory figures replaced.

In a bizarre press conference with British journalists via a radio link from Northern Cyprus, he accused the Serious Fraud Office (SFO), Scotland Yard, the Inland Revenue and the Government of conspiring to frame him. He would only receive a fair trial if a new government was elected which had "clean hands", he said.

The conference, in London, was held to launch a book, *Who Killed Polly Peck?*, by Nadir's former business associate Elizabeth Forsyth. The 59-year-old grandmother was unable to attend as she has been jailed for five years for handling £400,000 stolen by Nadir, who fled in May 1993 while being investigated by the SFO on 13 charges of fraud and false accounting amounting to £3.4m. They concerned the collapse of his fruit-packing-to-electronics group, Polly Peck, a 1980 star of the stock market which crashed in 1990.

Yesterday Nadir reiterated that the authorities and "people with money" were out to get him, not least because the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is not recognised by Britain. When asked if he would really return to face trial, he replied: "I certainly will. No regulatory authority and no government is in power for ever. Thank God there is a certain amount of democratic election and we know the elections are approaching. I hope the British public will give them view of what they think of the British government."

He defended his decision not to return to help Forsyth's defence, saying the judge refused to allow a video link for him to testify and be cross-examined. Forsyth's fate was a "great disappointment from a British justice point of view".

Nadir said he had been unjustly persecuted by the SFO, Scotland Yard and the Department of Public Prosecutions.

Nadir cultivated political contacts while in Britain. He famously sent a wristwatch to the former Tory minister Michael Mates with the inscription "Don't let the bastards grind you down" on the back.

The self-made man from Nicosia also contributed thousands of pounds to the Conservatives. Asked whether he regretted these donations, he said: "I never regret anything in my life. I regret having trusted the authorities."

Polly Peck was in the top 100 companies on the UK stock market in 1990 and was worth £2bn. It hit trouble that year when Nadir tried to buy the company back into private ownership without properly consulting his City advisers. Following a Stock Exchange inquiry the company went into administration. Shareholders lost everything.

Yesterday Nadir sent them a message, saying he would pay them back when he had proved his innocence.

"My battle is two-pronged – one is to clear my name, and two is to ensure that at the appropriate time Polly Peck shareholders by being active, get compensated in two ways.

"Firstly, with what I am endeavouring to build for them, which I will share with them at the end of the day, and two is by them fighting to seek the truth, because the truth is only their only weapon in this unjust affair."

Postal workers set to strike

BARRIE CLEMENT
Labour Editor

Britain faces the prospect of the first national postal strike for a decade after union leaders yesterday ordered a ballot on industrial action in a dispute over pay and working practices.

Leaders of the Communication Workers' Union yesterday declared that stoppages were "almost inevitable" after 11 months of negotiations over a "new way of working" broke down on Wednesday night.

While management registered its intention to engage in an intensive communications campaign with employees over the next few weeks, some have privately conceded that a vote in favour of action looks likely.

The union will urge its 140,000 members to back nationwide stoppages in support of an immediate reduction in the working week from six

days to five and a cut in hours.

At the heart of the dispute is suspicion among activists that a plan to introduce team-working would bypass the union's own communications structure. There is also deep distrust about the motives of management among ordinary union members, many of whom have taken part in a series of wildcat stoppages over the last 18 months.

Despite repeated denials from management, employees fear there is a "hidden agenda" to drop the second postal delivery thus cutting back on the number of full-time jobs.

The postal executive of the CWU yesterday agreed unanimously to begin balloting their members on 13 May, with the result expected on 2 June at the annual conference in Blackpool. In return for new working practices, management has offered a five-day week and a job guarantee by 2000. A new pay

system would increase basic pay from £187 to £211, says management. However, staff would retain only three of their 30 extra allowances. Average earnings would increase by up to £30 to £300 a week although managers will not quantify how much would be "new money".

Alan Johnson, joint general secretary of the CWU, seized on an admission by Brian Thomson, Royal Mail personnel director, that while 70 per cent of employees would earn more, around 30 per cent, who relied on overtime and allowances to make up their pay, would lose out. That was not the basis for a settlement, Mr Johnson said.

Mr Thomson said the service was "on the edge of a precipice". The union was expecting to get a cut in working time without making concessions. But he said negotiations were not complete and Royal Mail was prepared to put extra money on the table.

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politics

Major warns IRA ceasefire must come soon

COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

John Major yesterday warned the IRA that the ceasefire would have to be "credible, clear cut and certain" for Sinn Fein to be admitted to the all-party talks on 10 June.

The Prime Minister appealed to the IRA to resume the ceasefire with an assurance that the all-party talks will be "serious". But his remarks in the Commons underlined growing British fears that the IRA could

leave it until the 11th hour before calling a tactical ceasefire of violence to allow Sinn Fein to gain admission to the negotiations.

Behind the Prime Minister's remarks lies the clear threat that ministers could still seek to block Sinn Fein's admittance if the ceasefire is seen as an empty gesture. Mr Major said there was "no reason whatsoever for the IRA not to stay their violence immediately".

He said: "The all-party negotiations will be serious and

making a mistake... it's quite unnecessary. We have already been there. We set up an international commission by Senator George Mitchell to deal with decommissioning. My impression is the Irish Government are dragging their heels."

Mo Mowlam, Labour's spokeswoman on Northern Ireland, said Mr Spring's proposals were "entirely in keeping with the (Mitchell) report and provide the most sensible way to proceed".

The Government has refused

to say anything officially about the Spring proposals to avoid causing a crisis before the all-party talks, but they now hang in the balance, and Ms Mowlam's remarks put pressure on the Government to intensify its efforts to reach a compromise which will bring the Unionists and Sinn Fein to the negotiating table.

Downing Street refused to commit the Prime Minister to opening the talks, in spite of the request to do so by Dublin. Ministers have refused to endorse

the Spring plans because the Ulster Unionists oppose them. Irish sources said that was not the intention and British ministers were last night seeking a compromise to allow the talks to make progress on 10 June, if Sinn Fein is admitted.

Mr Trimble said the Ulster Unionists had shifted from their demand for decommissioning before the all-party talks with Sinn Fein to accept parallel decommissioning as recommended by the Mitchell report.

But the Ulster Unionists object to the Dublin proposals because it appears they would

involve a separate set of talks. Irish sources said that was not the intention and British ministers were last night seeking a compromise to allow the talks to make progress on 10 June, if Sinn Fein is admitted.

"They are all engaged in electioneering at the moment. The remarkable thing is the Unionists have accepted the Mitchell report, which includes parallel decommissioning. We are looking for a way through the problem," said one ministerial source.

Mayor sees red over 'scruffy' council

RICHARD SMITH

Labour councillor Adrian Gregson has caused a party rift by turning up for a meeting in a Manchester United football shirt.

Now the 33-year-old councillor could receive a red card from his own party if he makes another appearance in a United shirt at a Labour-run Worcester City Council meeting.

Mr Gregson went to a meeting on Tuesday, kitted out in a United shirt, a pair of rugby shorts, tennis socks and training shoes, to protest against a dressing down directed at scruffy councillors by Labour's mayor-elect Les Thomas.

Mr Thomas, 61, who becomes mayor next month, told councillors that some of them looked like they were heading for the beach and needed to smarten up. He has said he intends to seek legal advice to banish members from the chamber unless they wear a jacket and tie.

"I'm quite sure last night was a protest against my remarks and I'm very disappointed," said Mr Thomas, who was defending his Nunney ward seat in yesterday's local elections.

"I think it's bad form. It just showed a lack of dignity for the council and respect for the position. He did smile at me and I smiled at him but I was very disappointed... Everybody treated as a joke when I brought this up, but the point I was making was that people in the city look up to us and expect us to dress to a standard. We are, after all, the city fathers."

"Back in the 60's the High Sheriff of Worcester was digging his garden in an old pair of grey flannel and a shirt when a member of the public asked him if he thought it becoming to dig the garden in such old clothes."

"If that person had been in the chamber last night he would have blown a fuse."

"Who I take office I intend to ask the city solicitor if I can tell councillors who I think are improperly dressed that they should retire from the meeting until they put on a jacket and tie."

Mr Gregson, the Hereford and Worcester branch secretary for the public sector union Unison, said he would continue to dress casually when it suited him. "It's not important what you wear or what you look like," he insisted.

"People judge you by what you say and do."

"There are a couple of us who have been known to turn up for meetings in the summer wearing shorts."

"I normally wear whatever I've got during the day. If it's appropriate to wear a jacket and tie for work then I will but if it's not then I don't."

"I knew Les wouldn't appreciate the shirt but at least United played in red..."

"If we had beaten Nottingham Forest I don't think I would have been seen wearing it in public but now United are quite definitely going to win the championship."



Vote for coffee: Polling was slightly less than brisk at this station in Hungerford, John Major's constituency, yesterday as the local elections began. Photograph: Brian Harris

Hague urges councils to publish child abuse report

ROGER DOBSON

Councils working on publishing the confidential and controversial report into widespread child abuse at Children's homes in North Wales have been told by the Secretary of State for Wales, William Hague, that they must act quickly and fix a publication date.

The move by Mr Hague follows growing concern that the report is at risk of becoming bogged down in bureaucracy because of the need for at least four councils to agree on what action to take.

The report's authors are willing to take another look at their 300-page document to try and remove any hindrance to its publication. John Jillings, the former director of social services in Derbyshire, who chaired the inquiry panel, said yesterday: "I

would be happy to try and assist with the publication of the report and invited them to contact me. Today I have had some preliminary contact, and I can say no more than that."

Cwmbran County Council, which commissioned the report and who decided in March not to publish it, despite two years of work by three leading specialists in child care, ceased to exist after local government reorganisation on 1 April.

The report's summung up says: "It is clear that in a significant number of cases the lives of young people who have been through the care system in Wales have been severely disrupted and disturbed. At least 12 young people are dead."

These issues are of fundamental importance and we regard it as imperative that they

are addressed in the full view of public scrutiny. We consider that a public judicial inquiry should be initiated."

One of the reasons for not publishing it was the belief that it might contain libels against individuals. Welsh Office lawyers have been closely examining it over the past two weeks.

Lahour's spokesman on health in Wales, Rhodri Morgan, said: "The report must be published but we also must not lose sight of its main recommendation, that there is an urgent need for a full judicial inquiry."

Mr Hague has not ruled out a judicial inquiry which, it is estimated, could cost up to £5m. Supporters of the call for such an inquiry say that it is the only way of establishing what really went on in North Wales children's homes over two decades.



Hague: Exerting pressure

Labour urged to reform strike law

Legislation to allow sympathy action by strikers was called for last night by Kevin McNamara, a former Labour front-bench spokesman, in a clear message to the party leadership to review the employment laws, writes Colin Brown.

Secondary action was outlawed when James Prior was Barossa Thatcher's employment secretary, but Mr McNamara, a former Northern Ireland spokesman, said it should be included in a Bill of workers' rights.

"Secondary action is something which must be recognised," Mr McNamara told a meeting in Belfast. He said workers should be able to go on strike and engage in other industrial action and not be dismissed by their employer.

"A legal right to the suspension of a contract of employment during a lawful strike should be a defence in law. With that also must go the right to engage in secondary action, particularly where the employer moves work to another site."

Labour is currently debating reforming trade union laws but restoring legal rights to secondary action, where there is no connection with the dispute, is ruled out by Labour leaders.

In the meantime, the cost is enormous. Harry Fletcher, assistant general secretary of the National Association of Probation Officers, puts it at around £30,000 per tagger - based on the £1.3m committed to the pilot scheme. According to Mr Fletcher, that is twice as expensive as jail.

He also estimates that it would require at least 15,000 offenders to be tagged, instead of imprisoned, for the scheme to be cost-effective.

Home Office officials appear to be setting their ambitions somewhat lower at this stage, but in the meantime they are desperately seeking alternatives to expensive jail terms for less serious offenders.

The principal targets are not, as Tory politicians would like us to think, inner-city hooligans, but the fine defaulters cluttering up the jails, often women and people who fail to pay their television licence. Two further target groups are offenders who might merit two to three months in jail for property-related crimes, and as a way of monitoring prisoners released on parole or licence.

Such plans at least have the advantage of not seeking to restrain the kind of offender who is inherently unstable, and often violent. Rosemary Thomson, chairman of the Magistrates Association, said magistrates were also cautious optimists that tagging for fine defaulting might prove useful. This comes at a time when magistrates appear to have dropped any faith in curfews and tagging as a means of preventing further offending, except in a rather limited number of cases. They now suggest it should be used purely as a punishment restricting liberty. It would out, however, produce mopey from people who had failed to pay.

There is much more scepticism about using such a punishment for petty criminals who would otherwise merit jail. Mr Fletcher said: "In reality, the tag will never be an alternative and will just be added to existing community sentences. The only way it could be used as an alternative is by letting people out of prison early - but that wouldn't be politically acceptable."

Ministers told to keep tabs on edicts from Europe

COLIN BROWN

Ministers are to be held responsible for checking all European legislation to cut red tape on business and charities, under deregulation measures announced yesterday by the Cabinet Office.

The guidelines warn ministers that they should carry out their checks "at the earliest possible stage". And it points out: "It is much easier to influence a proposal when it is being discussed within the Commission than when it is being discussed with the Council of Ministers".

Ministers must personally certify that they have read both the risk assessment and a compliance cost assessment in order to satisfy themselves that the benefits of the regulation justify the costs.

The risk and cost assessment will also apply to all government

legislation in the initiative co-deregulation masterminded by Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister.

The guidance to all Whitehall departments says new laws must be necessary, aimed at the right target, and in proportion to the problem.

It also applies to all documents for the Cabinet or Cabinet committees, and all minutes to No 10 Downing Street for collective discussion that deal with proposals for business, charities and voluntary bodies and recommendations by public inquiries.

your deputy to take over if by tomorrow Conservative Party fortunes have not improved?" Mrs Prentice asked.

Mr Major bit back: "The last Labour politician who was that smug about elections is now earning his living elsewhere in Europe." The reminder of the misplaced hubris of Neil Kinlock in the 1992 election campaign hit home on the Opposition benches. The former party leader is now a European Commissioner.

The Prime Minister used his polling day Question Time for

a familiar warning. "The 10 highest council taxes are all Labour and that is a message that every voter should remember," he said. "If they want to pay an extra £225 on band D, then all they have to do is vote Labour and it is guaranteed."

"Southwark, Islington, Wellingborough - probably almost any Labour authority you can mention would have significantly higher council tax than the previous year and higher than a comparable Conservative authority."

Wellingborough? Did the

Northamptonshire town really warrant such scorn? Frank Dobson, Labour's environment spokesman, went in search of statistics. Though Wellingborough council has 16 Labour members, it is in fact run by 15 Tories with the help of three independent, he said later.

John Major tells a lie, clearly every time he speaks. He is trying to blame Labour for what the Tories are doing in Wellingborough. It's like blaming Labour for arms to Iraq and mad cow disease. I don't think he can help himself any more."

Hint of autumn election has rumour mill buzzing

A rumour that the Government is clearing the parliamentary decks in order to go for an autumn general election was given the added stamp of a Commons airing yesterday.

With MPs either taking over the Tory leadership hours, the beef crisis or doing a bit of council electioneering, Ann Taylor, shadow leader of the Commons, tried a different tack.

"Rumours are circulating that the Government intends to clear the decks of government business by July so as to minimise the need for a spill-over

session in October and thereby prepare the ground for an autumn election," she said during questions of forthcoming Commons business.

Tony Newton, Leader of the

Commons, agreed that there did indeed seem to be a lot of rumours about, including a suggestion the House might rise for its summer "very, very early" in July.

Normally MPs begin their holidays in the last week of July and return in mid-October for a couple of weeks finishing off legislation before the new parliamentary begins in early November.

But Mr Newton said he did not know who was putting the rumours around. "I only know it is not me and I do not want to give any credence to them."

While Tories readied themselves for a panning in the local elections, John Major heartened his backbenchers with an acid remark about "smug" Labour politicians taking too much for granted.

Bridget Prentice, Labour MP for Lewisham East, recalled that three times on Tuesday, the Prime Minister failed to give a direct answer to questions about a deal with his deputy, Michael Heseltine. "Have you ever discussed with Mr Heseltine the possibility that you would stand aside and allow

your deputy to take over if by tomorrow Conservative Party fortunes have not improved?" Mrs Prentice asked.

Mr Major bit back: "The last Labour politician who was that smug about elections is now earning his living elsewhere in Europe." The reminder of the misplaced hubris of Neil Kinlock in the 1992 election campaign hit home on the Opposition benches. The former party leader is now a European Commissioner.

The Prime Minister used his

polling day Question Time for a familiar warning. "The 10 highest council taxes are all Labour and that is a message that every voter should remember," he said. "If they want to pay an extra £225 on band D, then all they have to do is vote Labour and it is guaranteed."

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acceptance and surgery. "It was like coming home," she said. "When I realised that

Court of Justice found the behaviour of the school directors breached the 1976 Euro-

pean Convention on Human Rights, the Government would have to amend legislation.

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news

Allason row Claim over 'malicious' report rejected

Tory MP loses case against Blair press aide

MICHAEL STREETER

The Conservative MP Rupert Allason faces legal costs of up to £250,000 after his claim of malicious falsehood against Tony Blair's press secretary and Mirror Group Newspapers was rejected by the High Court.

Judge Sir Maurice Drake ruled yesterday that the MP for Torbay had suffered no financial loss over a *Daily Mirror* story claiming that 50 MPs had signed a Commons motion attacking Mr Allason.

The judge also decided that the MP had already reached a settlement with MGN over inaccuracies in the article, which included a published correction and a letter of "assurance" from Alastair Campbell, then political editor.

Though ruling against Mr Allason, Sir Maurice agreed there had been falsehood and malice in the Mirror story and said that as a witness Mr Campbell had not been "wholly convincing or satisfactory". The judge said: "He did not impress me as a witness in whom I could feel 100 per cent confidence."

Afterwards Mr Allason, 44, who writes under the name Nigel West, said he was disappointed at the verdict but pleased the judge had found malice and falsehood in the article and hinted he may appeal. "This may not be the end of the story by a long chalk," he said. He also has two further libel actions outstanding.

Mr Campbell, who denied responsibility for the story and the Early Day Motion which caused it, said later that the case should never have been brought. "There was never a shred of evidence against me. I now intend to get back to doing what I do."

Mirror Group lawyer Martin Crudace said costs for the case, awarded against Mr Allason, would be "up to £250,000". Costs for two preliminary hearings, awarded to Mr Allason, were "insignifi-

cant", he said, though the MP later disputed the amount of damages he would have to pay.

The six day high profile case centred on what the MGN's barrister Charles Gray QC described as a "minor, very short little item" in the *Daily Mirror* on 20 November 1992.

It claimed that 50 MPs had "challenged" Mr Allason to hand over his estimated £250,000 recent libel damages from MGN to struggling Maxwell pensioners.

The Mirror later published a correction, as only seven MPs had signed the motion, and Mr Campbell wrote to Mr Allason

ly up to no good" — with a handwritten EDM trying to get a MP to sign.

In his judgment Sir Maurice acknowledged the "utter contempt" Mr Galloway clearly had for Mr Campbell, who in turn disliked the MP. Though Mr Galloway had been an impressive witness, he was the only one claiming to have seen the canvassing, said the judge, and on the evidence, including Mr Campbell's strong denial, the "scales tilted" towards the defendant's case.

The judge ruled that Mr Campbell played no part in the EDM or the story, and despite "strongly malicious" feelings towards Mr Allason was not linked to the malice and falsity of the published story. Mr McSmith was also not involved. However, Sir Maurice said the *Daily Mirror* had been malicious because their employee David Bradshaw, Mr Campbell's deputy, had conceived the idea of the EDM, rushed into print without being able to check the number of signatures and had not approached Mr Allason.

The case failed because of the earlier settlement and the MP's failure to prove he lost a \$100,000 book deal as a direct result of the story.

During the hearing, Mr Allason had introduced a lighter note when he asked Mr Campbell whether he had ever written soft porn articles under the name "Rowena Gigolo". In his youth, yes, but not using that name, said Mr Campbell.

For the MP it is his first legal defeat in 23 cases, with "one draw". But he disputes he is "litigious". "I get things wrong and I have to make a correction in my book — I just expect other people to do the same."

With a hefty legal bill likely — potentially bigger than the £200,000 damages he won from MGN in 1992 — Mr Allason may be consoled that he represents himself and does not, as he puts it, "enrich lawyers".

The most colourful evidence came from the Labour MP George Galloway, who described how he had seen Mr Campbell — who was "general-

assuring him he had not been behind the EDM or the story.

However, the MP later sued for malicious falsehood, claiming that Campbell had been seen in the Commons "soliciting" MP's to sign the motion and that *Daily Mirror* journalist Andy McSmith, now on the *Observer*, was also responsible for the article.

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After consulting BMA members Dr Mac Armstrong, secretary of the BMA, in a letter to the House of Com-

mons Select Committee on Home Affairs

Britain's doctors have called for stricter firearms controls but have warned that medical and psychiatric tests on gun licence applicants will not prevent mass killings such as those in Dunblane and Tasmania.

The British Medical Association has told a parliamentary committee investigating firearms laws that such crimes cannot be predicted and doctors do not want to be involved in testing would-be gun owners.

"It is not possible from a medical viewpoint to assist in any reliable way with the prediction of those positively safe with firearms nor those who are unsafe," said Dr Mac Armstrong, secretary of the BMA, in a letter to the House of Com-

mons Select Committee on Home Affairs

The committee is investigating firearms laws in the wake of the massacre in Dunblane, in the Central region, in March when 16 children and their teacher were shot dead.

There have been suggestions that doctors should be required to assess the past medical and psychiatric history of gun certificate applicants.

The BMA published its evidence to the committee yesterday four days after the slaughter of 35 people by a gunman in Port Arthur in the Australian state of Tasmania again raised the issue of firearms controls.

"Past history may give clues to future illness and past violent behaviour is considered the best predictor of future violent behaviour, but only a tiny



Balancing act: Performers with the Chinese State Circus in rehearsal for their first tour outside China which is due to open tomorrow at the Brighton Festival. The circus will stay in the town until 26 May before a nationwide tour ends at the Edinburgh Festival

Photograph: Ralph Efe

BMA says no tests for mass killers

WILL BENNETT

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"Past history may give clues to future illness and past violent behaviour is considered the best predictor of future violent behaviour, but only a tiny

minority of patients with diagnosed psychiatric illness are dangerous and we suspect that most violent offences involving firearms are carried out by people who are not mentally ill."

He went on: "The BMA recommends that the Government considers further tightening of the regulations on the types of firearms legally available in this country."

The BMA was worried both that individual doctors could be blamed for approving certificates for gun owners who later commit murder and that the debate about how to prevent mass killings risks stigmatising the mentally ill.

Dr Armstrong said yesterday: "We are really rather concerned with the suggestion that these extraordinary and tragic events

have something to do with mental illness . . . There is an unfortunate possibility that if we let this drift that the public will come to associate mental illness with a rather mediaeval notion of danger."

The BMA also issued guidelines on the transplant of animal organs into humans yesterday. It said that such operations should only be carried out when there was a reasonable chance of success and that preference should be given to using human organs where possible.

There should be a supervisory body monitoring such cases, it said, patients should be told about the risks and allowed to refuse transplants from animals and children should not be involved in the early trials.

Arms-to-Iraq case Briton is freed by South Africa

CHRIS BLACKHURST
Westminster Correspondent

conspiracy, bank fraud and making a false statement. "The magistrate found they were not extraditable offences," said his South African lawyer, Peter Reynolds.

It was unlikely, said Mr Reynolds, that his client would return to Britain or leave South Africa immediately for fear of still being pursued by the US authorities. "He will stay here until the situation becomes clear — he needs an assurance of safe passage," said Mr Reynolds.

Until the US lifts the indictment and he is removed from the Interpol "red notice" list he could be arrested again. "It is going to mean that I am not going to do much travelling beyond the shores of the UK and South Africa," said Mr Grecian.

In 1992, Mr Grecian and two former colleagues, Bryan Mason and Stuart Blackledge, pleaded guilty at Reading Crown Court in trying to smuggle equipment to build an ar-

tillery fuse assembly line to Iraq via Jordan. They only pleaded guilty after the Government used Public Interest Immunity Certificates preventing Whitehall officials from giving evidence the exports had previously been cleared by the Department of Trade and Industry and Ministry of Defence.

Last December, the three had their convictions quashed by the Court of Appeal. Mr Grecian said yesterday he believed his detention in South Africa and the US's refusal, following his successful appeal, to drop the charges, was political.

"Undoubtedly there were political elements to it," he said. "When a third country becomes embroiled in a situation like this, which at the end of the day is none of their business, one has to take into account what political pressures the likes of the United States would try to bring to bear to ensure my extradition."

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Tycoon 'forced girl into sex threesome'

A 20-year-old woman sobbed yesterday as she told a jury she was raped by the tycoon Owen Oyston during a three-in-a-bed sex session when she was just 16.

She described how she sat and watched the 62-year-old multi-millionaire have sex with another woman in his four-poster bed before she was ordered to take her clothes off and join them.

The woman, who had been training to be a model, told Liverpool Crown Court yesterday how she joined the Manchester agency, Model Team International, as a 14-year-old. She was introduced to Mr Oyston by agency boss Peter Martin as "someone very important and dead rich".

On about the third occasion she met him, she accompanied him to his mansion. She said Mr Oyston had sex with Lisa and then ordered her to join them in bed. Asked why she had done so, the woman replied: "Because I was scared. Because he forced me . . . I was in a house in a bed with a guy I didn't even know, an old man. I didn't know old men did things like that. I was 16 years old and he didn't give a damn."

The trial continues today.

He also denies raping an 18-year-old model, who has already given evidence.

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The woman insisted: "I didn't even know him. I had never spoken to him. He didn't know me. He treated me as if I were an object and I'm not . . . I'm not."

Mr Oyston, of Chaucer Hall, near Lancaster, denies raping and indecently assaulting the woman between October 1991 and December 1992.

The trial continues today.

Glory revealed of church's faded relic

A faded tapestry which had hung for centuries on the wall of a remote rural church without attracting any more than passing attention has been identified as a 16th century masterpiece worth an estimated £250,000.

The Rev David Hayes, vicar of the 14th century St Andrew's church at Presteigne, on the Herefordshire-Welsh border, said: "We knew it was special but not this special."

Its value was eventually realised by a local historian Catherine Owens, who discovered that the 3 sq metre Flemish tapestry — depicting Christ on a donkey — was woven in Antwerp in 1511, and is one of only three similar works in the world.

It was believed they were made originally to hang in Canterbury Cathedral but were later moved.

One of the others hangs in Aix-en-Provence in southern

France and the third in the fine arts museum in San Francisco. Mr Hayes, 58, added: "We were shocked and delighted to discover its true value. Like many churches we face a programme of major building work but we haven't even discussed the tapestry's future. Selling is obviously one of the options that we will have to look at."

Ms Owens, 30, said: "Ever since I was a child it has been in the church. There were all sorts of stories about it and I decided to find out the truth."

"As I looked into it more I was amazed I became. I could not believe its value. It is a wonderful work."

Ironically the discovery has deprived parishioners of their treasure. Mr Hayes said: "We could not just ignore the security needs in this day and age and leave it hanging in the church. It has been removed to a place of safety while we decide on its future."

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news

Cantona fan is jailed for attacking lawyer

The football fan who provoked Manchester United's Eric Cantona to launch his infamous kung-fu kick was jailed for seven days for contempt of court yesterday after attacking a lawyer when he appeared for sentence.

Crystal Palace supporter, Matthew Simmons, 21, hurled himself shouting, at 55-year-old prosecuting counsel Jeffrey McCann in front of three magistrates at Croydon Magistrates Court in south London.

The attack came after the magistrates ruled that Simmons was guilty of two charges of using threatening words and behaviour during the Cantona incident at Selhurst Park on 25 January 1995.

Mr McCann got to his feet and started to apply for an order under the Public Order Act excluding Simmons from football grounds when Simmons leapt over a bench at him.

As police rushed towards him, Simmons swung his legs round over the bench, appearing to kick Mr McCann in the chest. As Mr McCann tried to get away, Simmons – his arms and legs flailing – held on to his collar. Mr McCann broke free as police overpowered Simmons and led him away in handcuffs. Simmons shouted: "I am innocent. I swear on the Bible. You press. You are scum."

The chairman of the bench,



Flashpoint: Eric Cantona's infamous attack on Simmons

within the hearing or sight of a person likely to be caused harassment, alarm or distress.

They also made an order excluding him from all football matches for 12 months.

Adam Davis, defending Simmons, said his client was sorry for his attack on Mr McCann.

"He would like to apologise to the court and to the members of the public and especially to Mr McCann. This certainly doesn't excuse his behaviour."

He said Simmons had been under immense pressure and had suffered death threats since the Cantona incident.

It had been suggested by the press that he was in some way responsible

for the death of a Crystal Palace fan in Birmingham in April last year, said Mr Davis. "I have spoken to the police force. They believe he has coped admirably with the pressure that has been heaped on him."

He said that recently Simmons had been hospitalised as a result of a severe panic attack which required treatment.

He said his client had not attempted to strike Mr McCann.

Mr McCann said of yesterday's attack: "I am content to accept his apology. I have no intention of pressing charges. I am not injured in any way."

In mitigation for the two offences of using threatening words and behaviour at Selhurst Park, Mr Davis said: "I am sure you will bear in mind what happened to the other party in this matter. You will also bear in mind that Mr Simmons would not have found himself in the position he is in today but for Mr Cantona's actions."

He said that since the Selhurst Park incident, Simmons had lost his job as a double-glazing fitter and was now training in word processing.

Outside court, Sonia Sims, solicitor for Simmons, said he continued to maintain his innocence on the charges of using threatening words or behaviour. "He will now consider his position as far as an appeal is concerned."

Business award: Widow takes centre stage with success



Top act: Janet Holmes à Court celebrates her award as Businesswoman of the Year

Photograph: Gertant Lewis

Theatre 'queen' takes a bow

Janet Holmes à Court, the "Queen of Shaftesbury Avenue", has been named Businesswoman of the Year.

The widow of Robert Holmes à Court and owner of 10 West End theatres received her award at a presentation at Cartridges in London yesterday.

Previous winners of the award, organised by Veuve Clicquot, include the Body Shop's Anita Rodick, Sophie Mirman of the Sock Shop and Pineapple founder Debbie Moore.

Mrs Holmes à Court took over the running of her husband Robert's £350m Heyesbury Holdings business empire after his death from a heart attack in 1990. She reshaped the group which along with Stoll Moss Theatres – London's largest theatre group – includes construction and engineering company John Holland and the Heyesbury Pastoral Group which owns 1.1 per cent of

Australia's land mass. An investment programme of £11m in the theatre group has increased Stoll Moss operating profits by 107 per cent.

A spokeswoman for Veuve Clicquot said Mrs Holmes à Court was almost a "mirror image" of Nicole Ponsardin in whose memory the awards were set up. Miss Ponsardin took over the running of her husband's vineyards on his death in 1905 and, known as Veuve Clicquot, built up a champagne house of international standing.

Other women shortlisted for the award were: Linda Allen, managing director of Howard Long International; Annoushka Ducas, founder of Lint of London; Dr Marry-Lorraine Hughes, chief executive of Portmeirion Pottery; and Rosalyn Wilton, managing director of Reuter Transaction Products.

Last year's winner was Patricia Vaz, head of British Telecom's payphones business.

Chef who tried to kill fiancée jailed

A chef was yesterday jailed for eight years for attempting to murder his bride-to-be and mother of his two children to benefit from her life insurance.

Andrew McNeill, 31, tried to throttle Paula Kew with her scarf as she returned home from visiting her parents to show them her wedding dress, the Old Bailey was told.

"You lay in wait for the woman you were to marry two months on and you strangled her close to death," said Judge Peter Beaumont. He added that the evidence that McNeill's motive had been for financial gain was "compelling".

McNeill had only failed to kill her because of the "fortuitous" arrival of her sister-in-law at their house in Camberley, Surrey. Miss Kew told the court that

all she remembered of the attack was seeing McNeill's life moving as she lay on the bathroom floor. "But I could not hear him. As far as I was concerned I was dead."

The prosecution had told the court McNeill had financial problems and was in debt.

McNeill had denied attempted murder on 12 February last year. Two months earlier he had taken out life assurance policies to provide more than £15,000 a year in the event of his wife's death. The couple were due to marry in April.

When arrested, McNeill allegedly told police he had arrived home to find the children screaming in the car outside the house. The front door was ajar and his fiancée's body was blocking the hallway.

DAILY POEM

End of the week

By Miroslav Holub

The foundation course is the time-table which sometimes applies from Monday to Friday, sometimes on Saturday, and exceptionally on Sunday, when He rested from all His works,

which we carry in a forgotten pocket so that usually we miss our connection.

But we get there all the same.

It'll be Sunday again, the day of waded songs. In the Spanish Square they will burn eighteen Jewish Marranos in honour of the marriage of Maria Luisa and Carlos. We will not even stop but go back home by a back street, deep in thought.

Miroslav Holub is Czech Republic's most important poet and also one of her leading scientists. Inspired by Homer and Virgil as a boy, he began to write verse in his school days and has produced 14 collections of poetry, although his work was banned in Czechoslovakia between 1970 and 1980. This poem is taken from his latest collection, published at the end of May. *Supposed to Fly* (Bloodaxe, £7.95) and he will be reading from this collection tomorrow in the Old Operating Theatre, 9a St Thomas Street, London SE1 9RY (0171 955 4791) at 7.30pm.

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birth certificates and passports." Missioning IRA weapons.

John Holmes

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BR clerk seeks travel rights for lesbian partner

An industrial tribunal was told yesterday that a lesbian couple had been unfairly discriminated against by British Rail in being refused travel concessions.

In what is being seen as a landmark case, Lisa Grant, 28, a Southampton Central station booking clerk, is claiming her partner, Jill Percey, 36, is entitled to the same travel benefits as are given to the partners of heterosexuals.

Cherie Booth QC, wife of the Labour leader, Tony Blair, told the tribunal at Southampton that it was a *novel* and interesting case brought on two bases, one under the Equal Pay Act and the other under European law.

She said that the "fine words" of British Rail's equal opportunities policy had not come up to scratch in practice.

The case was about the travel concessions policy for employees of British Rail as it was then, and now South West Trains Limited.

Ms Booth said the travel concession privilege was given in respect of long-term partners in stable relationships, which was taken to mean relationships of two years or more. It was a benefit which was of considerable worth and could amount to a great saving in cash.

The benefit applied to partners of the opposite sex, Ms Booth said.

"What happened in this case was the applicant applied for a travel concession for Jillian Percey," she said. Ms Grant declared she lived with Ms Percey, described as her common law spouse, and had done for two years or more.

Ms Booth said Ms Grant contracted her position with that of a male employee, Mr Potter, who had a common law spouse and had been granted travel facilities for her.

The QC referred to British



Lisa Grant (above) and Jill Percey: Landmark case



Jill Percey (above)

Rail's equal opportunities policy document which spoke of ending unfair discrimination and said the only justifiable reasons for discriminating was the inability to do the job.

It said that discrimination on any other grounds was against policy and could be illegal.

"Unfortunately for Ms Grant they were fine words which did not come up to scratch in practice," said Ms Booth.

She said the policy talked of

sexual preferences and she added: "It seems that in April 1994 the Railways Board were concerned to widen and take into account issues of sexual preference."

Nicholas Underhill QC, for South West Trains, said that neither English law nor European Union law prohibited discrimination against homosexuals. "Obviously different views are possible about whether it should do so but at present it does not," he said.

Mr Underhill said his submission had already been decided in his favour by the Employment Appeal Tribunal and by the Court of Appeal, and the tribunal was bound by those decisions.

He told the tribunal: "You should not be tempted to attempt to fill gaps in the legislation which are clearly political questions. The right way to outlaw discrimination against homosexuals is to do it through Parliament."

After hearing legal submissions from both sides, the tribunal chairman, Ian Edwards, said the tribunal would reserve its decision and the hearing concluded.

After the hearing, Ms Percey said she and Ms Grant had expected to have to await judgment on their case.

But she added: "I am confident sooner or later we will win because it is blatantly so unjust."

Angela Mason, executive director of Stoewerwall, a pressure group for lesbian and gay equality, which is supporting the two women, said of Ms Booth: "She is a professional barrister. She is very eminent in her field and she did a very competent job."

It could be up to six weeks before the tribunal's decision is announced. One option the tribunal could take is to refer the matter to the European Court.



Sales pitch: A statue of Flora being towed into position for a Phillips auction of Chilstone garden ornaments, antique furnishings and paintings at the company's former base at Sprivers, a National Trust house at Horsmonden, Kent. Photograph: Nicholas Turpin

Girl, 10, found by father's body in ravine

A 10-year-old girl spent 30 hours by her father's body after he plunged into a raging torrent during a walk in a national park on Majorca.

Katia Scallan watched as her 35-year-old father Neil slipped on a path and plunged into the Torreto de Parc in the park in the mountainous north of the island. As she scrambled down the ravine to her father, her mother, Alex, 34, who was carrying the couple's two-year-old daughter Michaela, walked on - unaware of the tragedy unfolding behind her.

Mrs Scallan, of Bishopston, Bristol, ran to a restaurant in the resort of Cala Millor to raise the alarm after realising that her husband and older daughter were missing. But Spanish police and rescue workers were unable to launch a search immediately because the dark made it too dangerous in the mountainous terrain.

A local British resident Humphrey Carter said: "It is a great gorge - it's a dangerous place, and the police wouldn't want to take risks up there."

The search was finally mounted at first light on Wednesday - and rescuers

found Katia by the body of her father in the afternoon. Katia, who suffered severe shock, was yesterday recovering in hospital in Palma.

A Foreign Office spokesman said: "This is a terribly tragic accident. Her father apparently fell and she spent the rest of the night with him."

The British Consul in Palma was yesterday preparing to fly Mrs Scallan and her two daughters home.

A spokesman for the Spanish Civil Guard said it was not yet clear whether Mr Scallan was killed by his fall or drowned

in the torrent. Shocked relatives were anxiously waiting news from Majorca at the Scallan family's home.

The blinds were drawn on every window in the next end of terrace house where Mrs Scallan's two distraught sisters were hoping she would telephone them.

Younger sister Emma Bevin sobbed as she told how they had learned of the tragedy only through the newspapers.

"We are waiting for Alex to contact us. We have no more information than is in the press," she said. She and her sis-

ter were too distressed to say any more to reporters. The family had been due to return home on Sunday from the two-week holiday.

A neighbour, Helen Jones, who teaches Katia the piano, said the child had talked excitedly of her holiday plans. Katia had explained that she would have to miss lessons.

"She told me how she was looking forward to her trip," Mrs Jones said.

Another neighbour, Andrew Leggatt, said: "This is really shocking news. They are a lovely family."

SEVEN EXOTIC HOLIDAYS TO BE WON WITH THE INDEPENDENT



WIN A TRIP TO TOKYO



Above & below: Four Seasons Hotel, Tokyo

Each day this week The Independent is giving away a fabulous holiday for two. We have teamed up with KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, Trailfinders and Four Seasons • Regent Hotels and Resorts, the world's leading luxury hotel group, to offer you the chance to win one of seven superb prizes to a variety of worldwide destinations.

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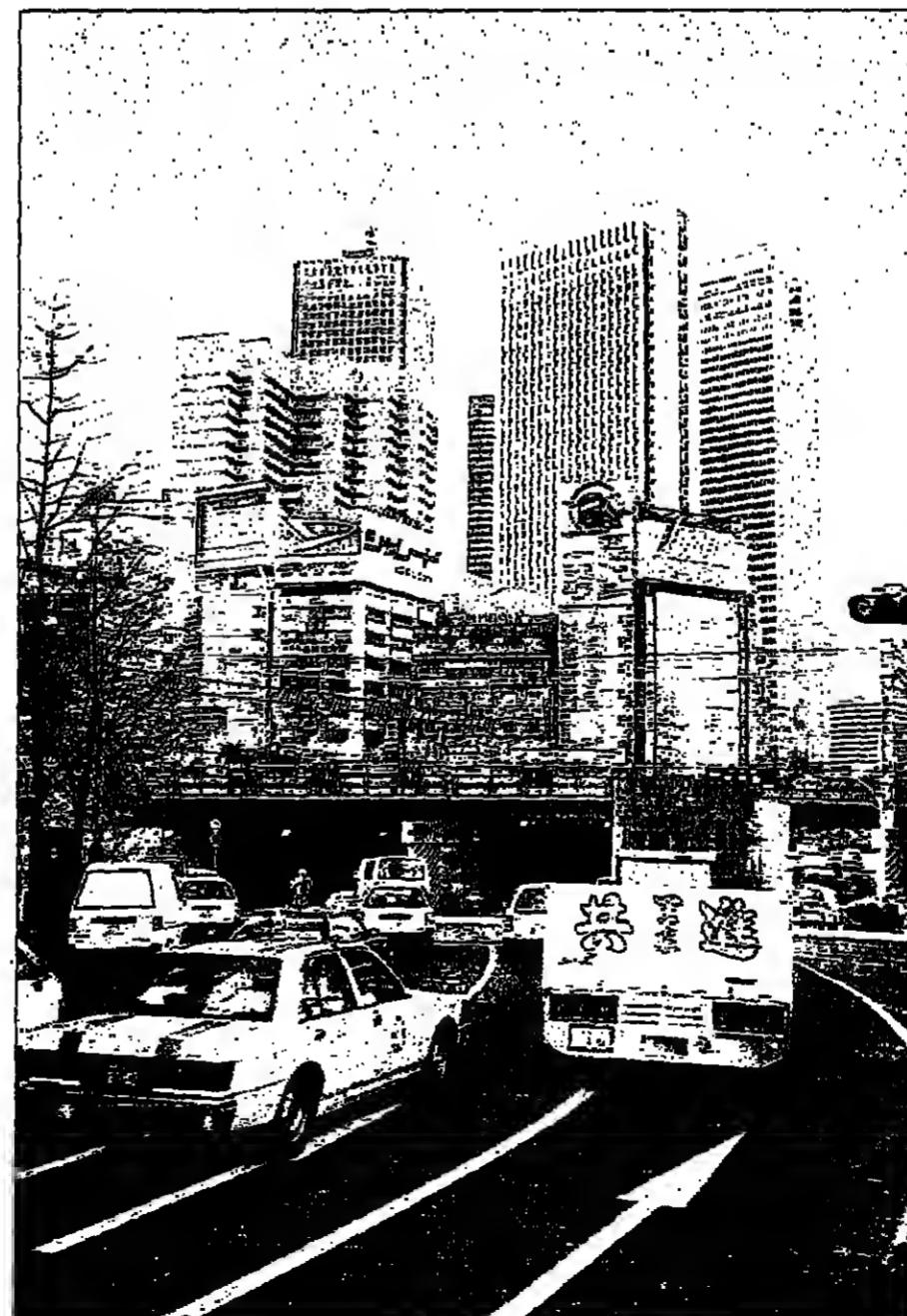
The hotel offers a choice of three signature restaurants and cafe, as well as a separate bar and lounge. The health club includes, jacuzzi, fitness gym and offers one of Tokyo's most complete spa facilities using hot spring water from Ito on the Izu Peninsula with atrium pool in a garden setting.

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Close encounter: A Boeing 727 belonging to Flyairline of Brazil skids into a road at take-off from Quito airport, Ecuador, on Wednesday. Ninety people were on board the flight, including members of the Brazilian soccer team. One player broke a leg. Photograph: Dolores Ochoa/AP

Nurses face abuse for treating gunman

ROBERT MILLIKEN
 Hobart

As Tasmania was still struggling to face the future after the massacre of 35 people at Port Arthur, tensions mounted yesterday at the Hobart hospital where the man accused of the killings is a patient.

Meanwhile, some marketing consultants have gleefully suggested that Port Arthur should

capitalise on the massacre and incorporate its description into future tours, along with the sites where convicts were kept in chains and flogged.

Five days after the horror at the island state's main tourist attraction, Martin Bryant, 28, remained under police guard in the Royal Hobart Hospital, being treated for severe burns which he suffered at the climax of last Sunday's siege.

Nurses at the hospital complained yesterday that people were abusing them in the streets for continuing to treat a man whom Tasmania's half-million people have collectively branded the personification of evil. The hospital itself has received threatening telephone calls.

Helen Gray, secretary of the Tasmanian nurses' union, said: "All nurses share the frustration and abhorrence at what has hap-

pened. They also have a duty to tend anyone put under their care. So far, no one has refused treatment to this patient."

The Tasmanian authorities are under strong pressure to move Bryant from the hospital, where some of the 19 people injured in the shooting are undergoing treatment for bullet wounds. Now he has been formally charged with one of the killings, preparations are being

made to move him to a prison hospital.

John Howard, the Australian Prime Minister, is expected to propose that Australia adopt uniform gun control laws. The New South Wales authorities yesterday agreed to surrender its powers over firearms to Canberra, and called on other states to do the same, although Tasmania's state government said it would not follow suit.

Swiss banks let search begin for lost Jewish cash

RUPERT CORNWELL
Washington

In an unprecedented lifting of their country's strict banking secrecy, Swiss bankers have agreed to set up an independent body with "unfettered access" to search for millions - perhaps billions - of unclaimed and untraced dollars allegedly deposited in Switzerland by victims of the Holocaust.

Representatives of the World Jewish Congress, the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem, and the Swiss Bankers' Association,

carthered so far reflect only accounts opened in person by Holocaust victims. Countless others, they argue, were opened by Swiss-based trustees and lawyers on behalf of Jews scattered across Europe whose names did not feature on them.

What indirect evidence there is suggests the sum could far exceed \$34m - a recently declassified US Treasury document from 1945 for instance claims one Swiss bank alone had 182 accounts on its books, mostly from Romanian Jews. Totaling \$2m at the time, these would now be worth \$20m with accrued interest.

Estimates of how much money is involve vary wildly. A survey by the Swiss banks themselves, made public last September, turned up only 775 accounts which had not been touched for half a century, containing \$24m (£22m) and presumably belonging to Holocaust victims.

But that estimate was decided by Jewish leaders here with the WJC president, Edgar Bronfman, claiming the true figure was probably "several billions" worth of dollars, gold, paintings and other valuables entrusted to Swiss banks. They insist the meagre sums un-

covered so far reflect only accounts opened in person by Holocaust victims. Countless others, they argue, were opened by Swiss-based trustees and lawyers on behalf of Jews scattered across Europe whose names did not feature on them.

What indirect evidence there is suggests the sum could far exceed \$34m - a recently declassified US Treasury document from 1945 for instance claims one Swiss bank alone had 182 accounts on its books, mostly from Romanian Jews. Totaling \$2m at the time, these would now be worth \$20m with accrued interest.

The irony is that the Swiss banking secrecy laws were introduced in the 1930s with the intention of attracting money from Jews and others scared by the rise of the Nazis. But these same laws have made it difficult for relatives of victims to recover the assets, as the banks have demanded death certificates and other documents either destroyed or lost because of the War. Jewish organisations have also complained at the £160 fee routinely charged by the banks for account searches.

Republicans panic as Dole faces fading fortunes

RUPERT CORNWELL
Washington

Only a year ago, they ruled Capitol Hill and the White House appeared ripe for the taking. Today, Speaker Newt Gingrich is arguably the least loved public figure in America, their Presidential aspirant Bob Dole trails Bill Clinton by more than 20 per cent in the polls, and Republicans contemplate the previously unthinkable - that the Democrats may well win back Congress.

So months still remain before election Day on November 5, time enough for the economy, Whitewater, or events in Bosnia, Russia or the Middle East to redraw the political landscape, but rarely in history have the fortunes of the two major US parties so swiftly and completely reversed.

In the spring of 1995, Republican and Democratic pundits alike were proclaiming a secular change in national politics, and a South returning to the Republican fold after more than a century, that would virtually guarantee the party a lock on power for decades. Today the calculation is very different and increasingly desperate: how to prevent the loss of just 19 seats that would hand the House of Representatives back to the Democrats.

For the moment at least, that task looks mighty hard. The problem is a vicious circle which the party shows no sign of breaking: an unpopular Republican Congress, saddled with an image of extremism and intolerance, drags down Mr Dole - whose own shortcomings as campaigner and projector of a clear-cut message cast a pallor on the prospects of Republican Congressmen and Senators themselves running for re-election. In voting preferences for the 435 House races, the Republicans now trail Democrats nationally by seven points.

The man in the trickiest position is Mr Dole. Far from his runaway victory in the primaries serving as a springboard, it has proved a trapdoor into an opinion poll abyss. According to a CNN/USA Today poll this week, Mr Clinton's lead has widened to 21 points, a gap at this stage which has never been closed in any recent election.

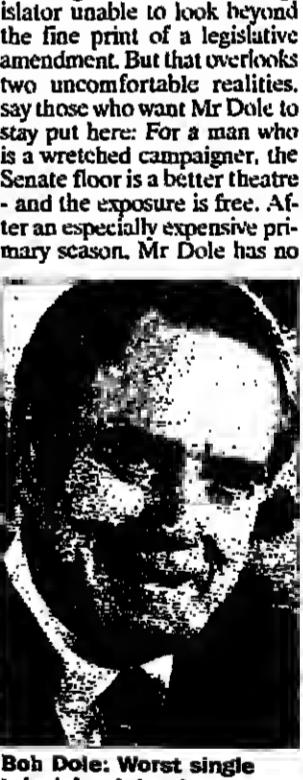
Some sanguine Republicans point to the 19 point advantage which Michael Dukakis briefly enjoyed over George Bush in the summer of 1988 before being soundly defeated that November. What they do not mention, however, is that Mr Bush was facing one of the poorest campaigns of recent times. Alas for Mr Dole, he must face one of the very best.

The result has been a creeping panic, verging on open rebellion. Emerging briefly from a self-imposed political purdah last week, Mr Gingrich pronounced the party to be "in a

THE US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS '96

funk." A recent TV interview by Mr Dole was described by the Republican columnist Bob Novak as the "worst single television interview" by a television candidate in 20 years, reflecting "disorganisation, lack of discipline and failure to articulate a coherent message."

But how is Mr Dole to put that right? Step down as Senate majority leader, say some, and get out into the country to project a vision for the country, shedding the mantle of our legislators unable to look beyond the fine print of a legislative amendment. But that overlooks two uncomfortable realities, say those who want Mr Dole to stay put here: For a man who is a wretched campaigner, the Senate floor is a better theatre and the exposure is free. After an especially expensive primary season, Mr Dole has no



Bob Dole: Worst single television interview

money to spend on campaigning and advertising.

Meanwhile, as that argument continues, the Kansas Senator is signally failing to display the vaunted mastery of the Senate. On a host of issues, ranging from the minimum wage to health care reform, he has been stymied and outmanoeuvred - sometimes by a Democratic Senate minority, sometimes by opponents within Republican ranks.

As he conducts Congressional business, Mr Dole must also tend to party affairs, above all the August nominating convention which, along with his choice of Vice President, will be his great opportunity to mobilise his dispirited troops. But at the most untimely moment, the abortion issue again threatens to create turmoil in San Diego.

The bugbear, as in the past, is the traditional clause in the party platform calling for a constitutional ban on abortion.

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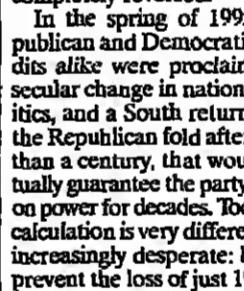


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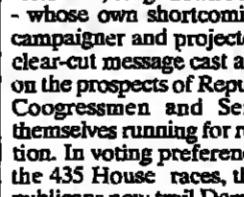


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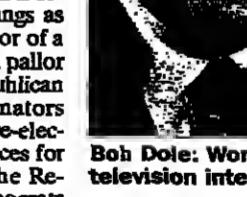


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international 11

Chirac's year of living dangerously

The French are weighing their President's record, Mary Dejevsky reports from Paris

The Elysée is not making a big fuss; Jacques Chirac himself has hardly mentioned the subject, but the first anniversary of his election as President of France is almost upon us, and France's politicians, pollsters and commentators are busy drawing up the balance sheet.

Mr Chirac's own Gaullist (RPR) party is feeling reasonably content, if only to be back in power, and is holding a celebratory national council meeting in Paris on Sunday. The Gaullists' coalition partners, the UDF, have just elected a new leader and have troubles enough without worrying unduly about a president with six more years of his term to run. The *de jure* opposition leader and defeated presidential candidate, Lionel Jospin, snipes from the sidelines about Mr Chirac's broken election promises, but has produced no convincing alternative platform.

On the streets, the view is less divided along party lines and more uniform, but it contains one big and abiding contradiction. One year on, people tend to like Mr Chirac, but they are disappointed with what he has actually done.

The polling organisation BVA, for the magazine *Paris Match*, found that a large majority of those polled (83 per cent) said they found Mr Chirac "dynamic", slightly fewer found him "nice" (76 per cent) and "close to the people" (68 per cent). However, 66 per cent said that on economic and social policy things had gone "worse than expected".

These findings mask a bumpy ride for the President. Over the summer and autumn, with the decision taken to conduct a last series of nuclear tests, an Algerian-inspired fundamentalist bombing campaign in progress, and an upsurge of labour unrest in gestation, Mr Chirac's popularity slumped. His recent return above 50 per cent has been afeat, not least because his first year has delivered in many instances the precise opposite of what he promised during the election campaign.

The priorities of his election



Bumpy ride: For Jacques Chirac (right) the year has been marked by protest at nuclear testing (left) and (below, from left) the Paris bombing and industrial unrest

campaign – and the points on which voters, especially younger voters, are thought to have elected him – were his pledges to reduce unemployment, narrow what were seen as growing social divisions and reduce taxes. He also promised a referendum on education reform.

In fact, unemployment increased for 11 months, before registering a very small 4,000 fall in March; high-profile and expensive job-creation schemes are treated with growing public scepticism. And a promised bill to combat "social exclusion" has not materialised.

Taxes have been raised: 2 per cent went on value added tax in August; a special tax of 0.5 per cent on total income was introduced in February to help pay off the social security debt.

The bane of employers' lives – their contribution to employees' national insurance and health costs – has not been reduced. A promised tax reform was postponed and even though Mr Chirac amended the constitution last summer to make such a reform possible, the referendum on education seems further away than ever.

Instead, Mr Chirac set about abolishing conscription – a decision that may in time be-

come a hallmark of his presidency but which has thoroughly divided French opinion.

Aside from the decision on conscription, the real achievements of Mr Chirac's first year are international. While the

decision to resume nuclear testing was a huge – and unantic-

pated – diplomatic liability, it sent the message that France was back on the international stage, as awkward and Paris-centred as ever.

Mr Chirac's unilateral *démarche* on Bosnia after the "humiliation" of French soldiers, and on Lebanon after a

personal diplomatic initiative risked ridicule, eschewed European team-playing and irritated Washington. Probably, though, both moves made a difference.

In Europe, Mr Chirac managed to opt out of much of the Schengen agreement on open

European borders without being dubbed anti-European. He brought France back into the leading structures of Nato without being condemned for betraying Gaullism.

Further afield, he worked to restore "special relations" with the Francophone world and

other traditional areas of French influence.

Altogether, Jacques Chirac emerges from his first year as a very old-fashioned sort of French president: an embodiment of French interests and style abroad; an aspiring advocate for "the people" at home.

Silent during the labour unrest of the winter, he did not publicly support the government's tough line and he kept channels open to the unions and strikers. A recent attack on hypermarkets as the scourge of French towns was applauded because all French shoppers imagine themselves patronising small shops – even as they set off to the hypermarket.

Other concerns – like balancing the budget, meeting the Maastricht criteria, making the welfare system solvent – are left increasingly to the government. Mr Chirac can then urge from the sidelines: don't raise taxes, don't ration healthcare, don't let small traders go out of business.

His one looming problem is that if his own popularity continues to be bought at the cost of his government's unpopularity, the right could lose its parliamentary majority in two years' time – and with it the right

IN BRIEF

Zulus arrested for royal attack

Durban — Police raided a workers' dormitory controlled by Zulu nationalists to arrest nine men in connection with last week's attack on the Zulu royal family. The arrests came amid rising tension in the Zulu homeland in KwaZulu-Natal province four weeks before scheduled local government elections considered a showdown between the Zulu nationalist Inkatha Freedom Party and the rival African National Congress. AP

Muslims indicted

The Hague — Bosnia has arrested two Muslims indicted by the UN criminal tribunal for former Yugoslavia for war crimes against Serbs. A tribunal spokesman identified the two men as Hazim Delic and Esad Landzo who were indicted along with two other suspects for crimes allegedly committed at the Celebici prison camp at Konjic in central Bosnia in 1992. Reuter

Albanian Exchange

Tirana — The Albanian National Bank yesterday opened a stock exchange, the first in the history of Albania, where the economy is struggling to follow the free-market rules. AP

Mexican drug bust

Washington — Federal agents arrested dozens of people around the country the breakup of a coast-to-coast Mexican-Colombian cocaine ring. Codenamed "Zorro II" the operation is the first to arrest Mexican drug couriers and dealers and Colombian traffickers from the country "manager" down to street-level distributors. Drug Enforcement Administration officials said. AP

CIA director search

Rock Point, Maryland — As the search for former CIA Director William Colby was scaled back, his widow said she believed he was still alive. "Bill survived parachuting into France and Norway to fight the Germans in World War II. He survived two tours of duty in Vietnam and a horrible mugging ... even if he survived all that, he can survive tipping over in a canoe." Sally Shelton-Colby said. AP

Dead and alive

Manila — Mourners at a wake for a murdered Filipina waitress were stunned yesterday when the woman they were grieving for walked in very much alive. Reuter



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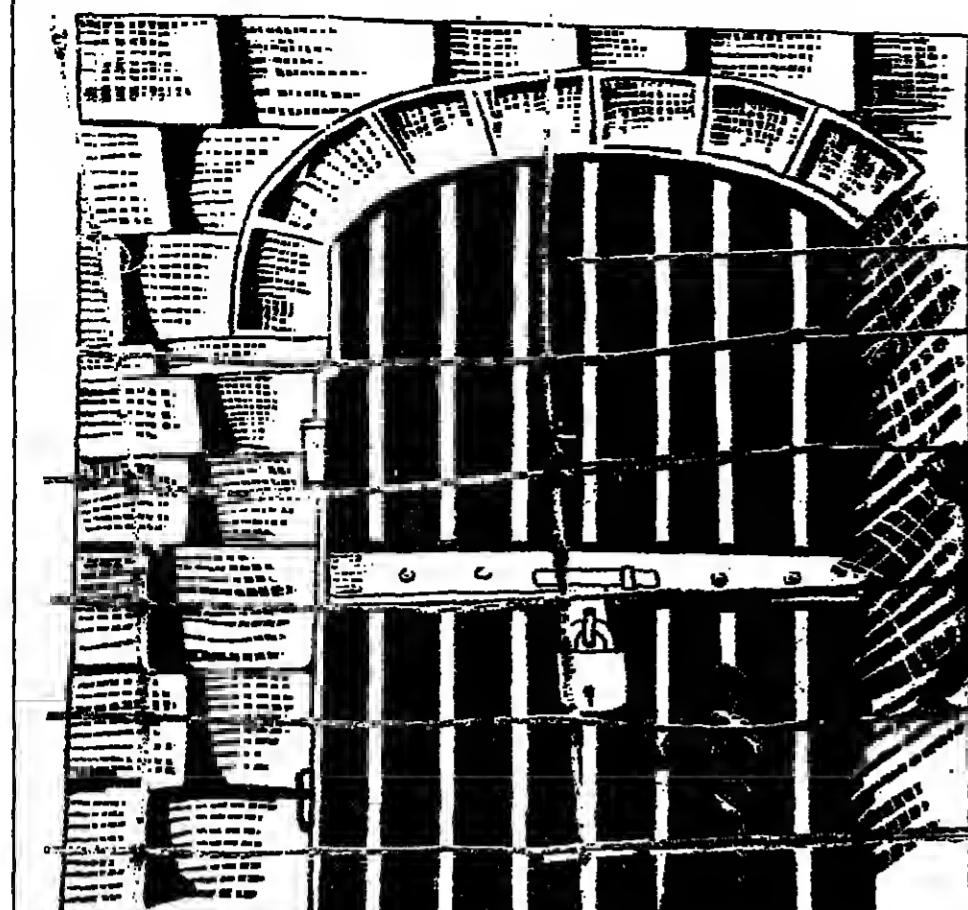
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Behind bars: Men working on a billboard in Bombay urging voters to shun corrupt candidates

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Photograph: Savita Kirloskar/Reuters

Fair play keeps polls calm

TIM MCGIRK
New Delhi

Maybe it had to do with the orders for Indian police to shoot on sight. Or the "preventive" arrest of 300,000 suspected troublemakers around the country. But the second round of India's general elections passed off yesterday without the customary killings and hired thugs smashing up polling booths.

Heated election contests in the states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, and Tamil Nadu were expected to spill into violence, Bihar is usually the most troublesome state at election time. The private armies of feudal landlords and revolutionary peasants have carved up this north Indian state along the Ganges river and, until yesterday, the winning candidate was not the man with the best record but he who could muster the biggest firepower.

Of the seven Indians killed during polling yesterday, six

were from Bihar. Four died in clashes between rival political gangs, and the other two were would-be bombers who blew themselves up. In Andhra Pradesh, a police officer was killed by a landmine planted by Naxalite revolutionaries who oppose the elections. Officials said that having only seven deaths during this colossal democratic exercise, which covered 17 states and involved 220 million registered voters, was as close to a peaceful election as they dared to hope for.

The elections went off smoothly not only because of tight security - over 600,000 police and paramilitary forces were deployed for poll duty - but also because India's autocratic chief election commissioner, TN Seshan, has scared politicians into playing fairly.

Lok Sabha (parliament). If so, Mr Rao, 73, is likely to be ousted as Congress party leader.

In the election run-up, Mr Rao has been dogged by bribery and housing scandals, his party lieutenants rebelled against him, and yesterday an arrest warrant was issued on the Prime Minister's favourite guru, Chandraswami.

A "godman", as the Indian press calls him, who is better known for his power-holding abilities than compassion, Chandraswami is accused of conspiracy to swindle \$100,000 (266,500) from an Indian residing in Britain. Most damning of all for Mr Rao, the magistrate took a swipe at the Central Bureau of Investigation - which answers directly to the Prime Minister - for "dilly-dallying" in probing the swami's controversial activities.

The main opposition party, the right-wing Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party, yesterday demanded Mr Rao resign even before the next round of polls. His

Franz fails the fun test

If anyone is harbouring plans to laugh at the Austrian Chancellor, Franz Vranitzky, then here is a friendly piece of advice: think again. The Chancellor likes to be taken seriously and will go to considerable lengths to make sure his dignity is upheld. In particular, it is important to try not to think of him without any clothes on.

Hubertus Czernin, editor in chief of the top Austrian news magazine, *Profil*, encouraged this little fantasy among his readers recently when he used a picture of the Chancellor's head superimposed on a naked male body, on the front cover of the March issue. He was portrayed as chubby, hairy, and modest - he was covering "his" genitalia with "his" hands. Now, according to *Profil* staff, Mr Czernin has been sacked and the Chancellor's office is taking legal action.

The caption next to the photo-montage read: "How [Vice-Chancellor] Wolfgang Schüssel stripped shirt and trousers off Franz Vranitzky." This was a reference to the Social Democratic Chancellor's alleged concessions in coalition talks with Mr Schüssel's conservative People's Party. The sacking triggered an outcry.

"The editorial staff of *Profil* is most vehemently opposed to the firing of Hubertus Czernin," the journalists said in a statement.

Mr Czernin has apologised to Mr Vranitzky, but declined to make any public statement

replace the editor-in-chief and to change the paper's profile to make it "objective, neutral and apolitical". According to the journalists, this is code for submissively pro-government.

Mr Jakubas is apparently upset by a perceived right-wing tendency in the paper. The journalists fear that *Zycie* will no longer deal with subjects that make the new rulers feel uncomfortable. The newspaper was attacked by former communists last year after publishing articles about the ruling coalition of the ex-communist Democratic Left Alliance and the Polish Peasants' Party.

"The change of profile of *Zycie* is part of the offensive of the ruling coalition against the Polish media," the journalists warned, adding that the appointment in mid-April of *Profil* Peasant's Party politician Ryszard Miazek as head of public television was part of a government attempt to gain wider control of the media. Mr Miazek has already announced that public television should serve the government.



Vranitzky as he might be if he had a different body

on the reports of his sacking.

Somewhat surprisingly, the far-right Freedom Party leader Jörg Haider said he backed Mr Czernin in the controversy. While he did not agree with the editor's political views, Mr Haider said he would do his utmost to ensure that freedom of expression was guaranteed.

They are also struggling with issues of censorship and press freedom in Poland. Nearly half of the staff of a leading newspaper, *Zycie Warszawy*, said they were resigning this week in protest over a change in policy forced by a new owner.

The businessman Zbigniew Jakubas has announced plans to

James Roberts

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acceptance and surgery. "It was like coming home," she said. "When I realised that

Court of Justice round up behaviour of the school directors breached the 1976 Euro-

that the Government would have to amend legislation.

such as birth certificates and passports." misusing IRA weapons.

JP/11/96

international

Poles seek their place at heart of Europe

From the terrace of his presidential palace, Alexander Kwasniewski peers towards the West, and raises a champagne glass to Europe. But what, exactly, is this "Europe" that the new Polish President, a suave former Communist, sees on the horizon?

Europe will have "new direction" once Poland joins, he predicts. "A Europe of nations, states with deep co-operation," he says, in terms vague enough to please John Major and, perhaps, Boris Yeltsin, too. And where would its border finally be? Might Russia one day join the European Union and Nato? For now, that would be going a little too far, he said. But, he said: "You never know. This is the building where the Warsaw Pact treaty was signed." He paused and added: "Anything can happen in politics."

The EU and Nato plan to open their doors to up to 12 eastern European members early in the new millennium. For the former communist countries of eastern Europe, early membership of the two organisations has been viewed as an imperative from the day they broke free of Moscow. In Poland, by far the biggest of the would-be members, "Europe" is viewed as a means to achieve stability; to guarantee Poland's statehood and freedom from Russian influence; and to win a stake in a powerful economic alliance. But what else do Poles see when they look to "Europe" and the EU? And has the country's view to the West been blurred by the rise to power of men who once had paid allegiance to the East?

Polish intellectuals who played a key role in the coun-

The political élite believes their country will provide the new motor for the EU, writes Sarah Helm in Warsaw

try's early reforms argue that it is Poland's right to be at the heart of Europe and that right was stripped from it by history. They would have been in at the start if they had had a chance.

Once Poland is back where it belongs, they suggest, it will play a central role in European affairs.

Kwasniewski: Poland will give Europe a new direction

To them, it is clear that Europe must be a strong alliance, built on deeply integrated structures. There is talk in Warsaw of forming a new power bloc at the core of Europe, a "Weimar triangle" linking France, Germany and Poland. This political élite appears to believe that the new European "motor", fuelled by Polish energy, might give the EU the new direction it needs.

But this vision is at odds with the EU's own uncertain view of its future and is riddled with contradictions.

Polish intellectuals who

played a key role in the coun-

tries needed to reform the economy may ebb away.

It is already evident in some sections of Polish society that not everything "Europe" stands for will be good. There have always been Euro-sceptic elements in Poland – in the Catholic Church, for example, and among the farming population, which fears mass unemployment when competition with the West begins to bite.

Privatisation is largely favoured, but questions are asked about the sacrifices. "Solidarity was the first to launch the liberalising programmes," says Marian Krzaklewski, president of Solidarity in Gdańsk, where the shipyard faces closure. "But you will hear people ask today whether the only way to attract investment is to sell off our best companies. If they are such promising firms, why don't we keep them ourselves?"

In Warsaw there is also a sense of frustration about Europe's wrangling over issues which to Poles seem irrelevant. "The arguments over issues of consensus and majority voting are details. Great Britain might be worried that the EU means a loss of sovereignty but for us it can only mean a growth in sovereignty," says Jacek Saryusz Wolski, minister for European integration. Ordinary Poles remark that EU countries now seem too worried about "their own problems".

The failure of both the EU and Nato to give the east Europeans a firm deadline for joining is also causing anxiety.

The fear is that if the EU does not open its doors soon, the willingness of Poles to make the sac-

cessibilities have been offended by a small, blonde, plastic, and utterly Western creation – the Barbie doll.

Russian traditionalists may have grown used to seeing their compatriots queuing by the hundreds to eat a Big Mac, or driving around Moscow's streets in BMWs, or avidly reading *Good Housekeeping*, *Cosmopolitan* and *Penthouse*. But the esteem in which the nation's small girls hold Barbie is just too much to bear.

At least, it is for Slava Zaitsev, 58, one of the country's leading fashion designers. He has accused the doll of being "absolutely cold, scrawny, cynical and pragmatic". He also thinks that she is unduly sexual (though not sexy). And he plans to supplant her – with a

warm-hearted Russian doll who has that most elusive of Slavic properties: "soul".

That Barbie is hugely popular in Russia is not at issue. You only have to poke your head in the Moscow's huge children's store "Detki Mir" to find Barbie in scuba gear, Barbie at the Oscars, Barbie as a pilot. She is on sale everywhere. You may not be able to find an edible

sandwich or a working lavatory at many Russian airports. But Barbie, in all her cosmetic glory, is certain to be there. So, for that matter, are Ken and Sindy.

To find a prototype for his rival doll, Mr Zaitsev – designer of the forbidding black robes worn by Russia's senior judges – staged a competition among 15,000 girls called "Goodbye Barbie, Hello Marusia". A

panel of designers, toy-makers and artists selected three angelic-looking children, aged between eight and six: Katalina, Vika and Anna.

Exactly what the finished product will look like remains to be seen, but if Mr Zaitsev's prescription for a good doll is any guide, it will be more "babushka" than babe, more mother than moron. "It is high

time to think of the creation of our Russia dolls with a Russian soul," he told the *Moskovsky Komsomolits* newspaper. "... it must be chubby and cuddly."

The fashion designer has dreamt up some headline-catching stunts to sell his own toy, such as using two giant balloons to spirit Barbie away from Russian soil. Patriots will, no doubt, applaud.

Yeltsin softens stance on rebels

PHIL REEVES
Moscow

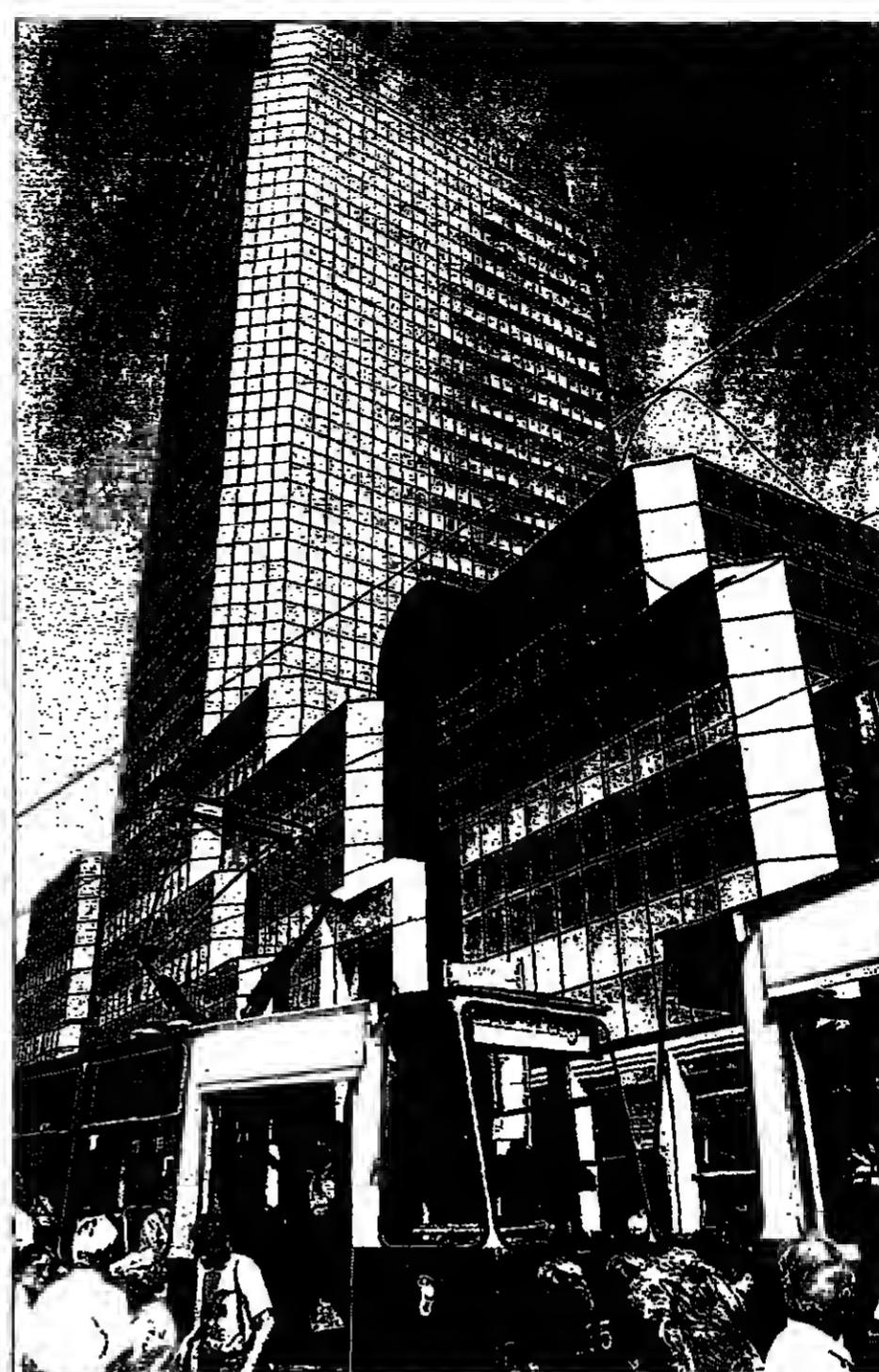
Boris Yeltsin is planning to see first-hand the small, rebellious Caucasian republic that has done so much damage to his credibility and prospects for re-election. Yesterday he said he planned to go to Chechnya in the middle of the month and was prepared to meet separatist representatives, according to Interfax news agency.

The visit would be his first since he launched the war by sending in troops in December 1994 and appears to be another step in efforts to end the conflict before next month's election. His stance appears to mark a softening of tone; he refused to negotiate directly with the rebel leader, Dzhokhar Dudayev, who was killed on 21 April. Dudayev's successor, Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, said he was ready to talk to Moscow's top leaders, without naming the President.

Whether he would seriously negotiate so soon after talking over the leadership remains doubtful, if only because he would risk being accused by fellow Chechens of betraying Dudayev's cause. He has already demanded several conditions, saying talks should be conditional on withdrawal of Russian troops, and have nothing to do with "propagandist acts in the pre-election period".

As the two sides manoeuvred, hostilities continued. Authorities in neighbouring Dagestan said rebels took seven policemen hostage. In Shali, 30 miles from Grozny, the Russians threatened to attack the town unless 300 separatist fighters lay down their weapons and left.

■ **Riga** – A report for a Russian think-tank calling for a pre-emptive strike against the Baltic states if they got into Nato has caused alarm. Reuters reports. "In such an event, it is impossible to rule out pre-emptive military action by the Russian Federation armed forces against armed nationalistic units with the aim of decisively cutting short possible practical steps towards carrying out the implementation of the mentioned provocative plans," the report was quoted as saying.



Prosperous Warsaw: The government is committed to economic reforms required for EU membership, but there is anxiety over the lack of a deadline. Photograph: Geraint Lewis

Barbie's invasion of Russia faces stand from a doll with 'soul'

PHIL REEVES
Moscow

The West has never been in any doubt about their dislike of Nato expansion, or foreign debt, or international criticism of their clapped-out nuclear power stations. But the Russians' latest grievance against their old Cold War foes is of a more personal nature. Their

sensibilities have been offended by a small, blonde, plastic, and utterly Western creation – the Barbie doll.

Russian traditionalists may have grown used to seeing their compatriots queuing by the hundreds to eat a Big Mac, or driving around Moscow's streets in BMWs, or avidly reading *Good Housekeeping*, *Cosmopolitan* and *Penthouse*.

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international

Olive Tree to prune Berlusconi's empire

ANDREW GUMBEL

Rome

Italy's new centre-left government intends to introduce legislation within the next three months that would force the former prime minister Silvio Berlusconi to sell one of his three private television networks and a drastic reorganisation of the public broadcasting service.

Walter Veltroni, the deputy leader of the winning Olive Tree coalition, who is tipped to take a leading role in the broadcasting reforms, told *The Independent* that the new government, expected to take office in the next three weeks, wanted to settle the media ownership issue by the summer holidays.

Both Mr Berlusconi's Fininvest empire and the Rai state broadcasting service would be cut back from three network channels to two; tenders would

be put out to new private investors and rules would be drawn up to encourage and regulate cable and satellite programming.

"Nobody will be allowed more than two channels," Mr Veltroni said.

That is what the Constitutional Court has decreed in a ruling which must be respected by August at the latest, and that is what Fininvest and I decided in the agreement we worked out last summer."

The move is likely to be fiercely contested by Mr Berlusconi, who has battled to keep control of his media empire despite his entry into politics and who felt vindicated when he won a series of referendums on media ownership last summer.

A radical reorganisation of Italian broadcasting could interfere with Mr Berlusconi's plans to float his media interests on the Milan stock exchange.

change by the end of June. Since the referendums Mr Berlusconi has regrouped his media companies into a new company called Mediaset and has sold roughly 30 per cent to Italian banks and foreign investors.

The chairman of Mr Berlusconi's business empire, Fedele Confalonieri, said earlier this week that he had been assured by the country's leaders that "our firms will not be dismantled", and that the company was a national asset.

But this is a view shared by many financial analysts, who argue that the creation of Mediaset and the ensuing share sell-offs have merely enabled Mr Berlusconi to attract new capital without relinquishing overall control.

Mr Veltroni was confident the new legislation would pass without excessive protest from Mr Berlusconi, who is now leader of the opposition.

"The Constitutional Court ruling would have forced him to lose one channel anyway. It's in his interests to find a solution," Mr Veltroni said.

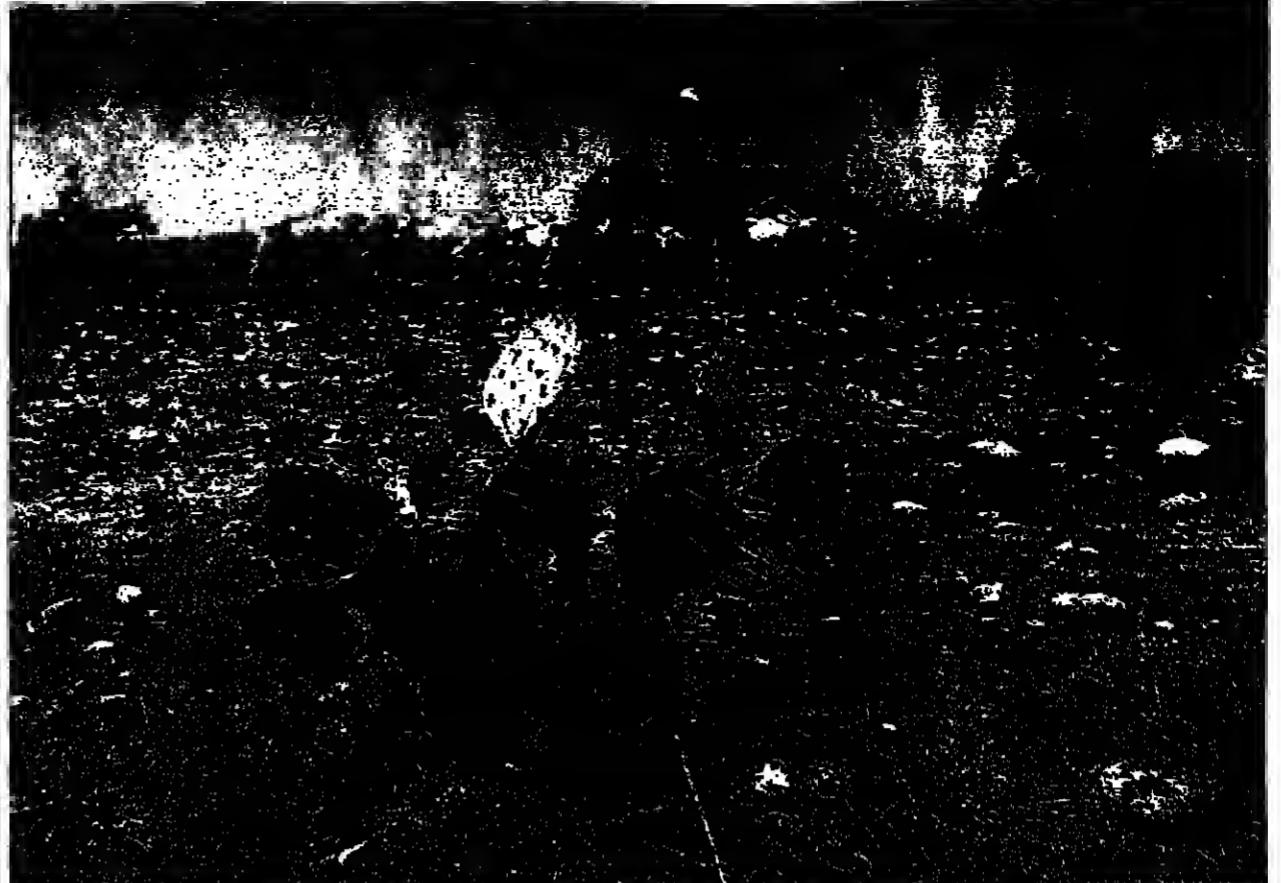
"We have no intention of starting a witch-hunt or provoking confrontations."

The new government also hopes that Rai, whose programme output has come to resemble Mr Berlusconi's blend of cheesy game-shows, films and imported serials, will return to its original role as a genuine public service.

Mr Veltroni said he hoped the new board of management at Rai, which must be approved by the new parliament, would reintroduce educational and cultural programmes which had been slowly squeezed out over the past 10 years.

"We want to take the politics out of programming and create a body that promotes quality," he said.

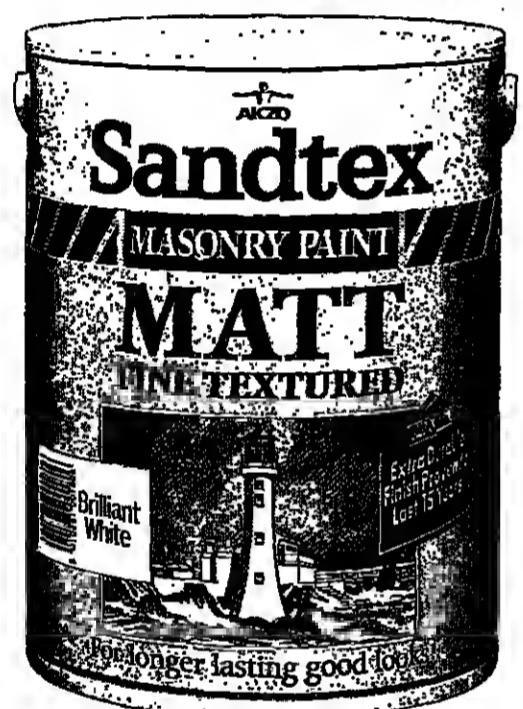
Drought days: Ranchers in Texas herd cattle to market to sell rather than risk a water shortage. Photograph: AP



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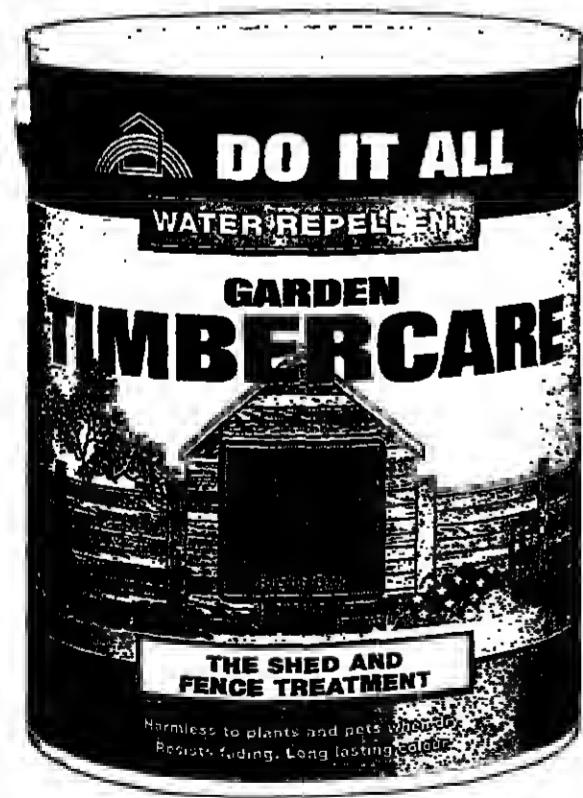


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European arm of Nato seeks a wider reach

CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY
Defence Correspondent

The Western European Union - the European arm of Nato - wants to be able to "mount and control peacekeeping, humanitarian aid and crisis management" by the end of the year, Foreign Office officials said yesterday.

A situation centre has been set up at the WEU headquarters in Brussels to control and monitor operations. Sources yesterday said the technology for command, control and communications would all be in place by the end of the year. There has also been an agreement on "strategic airlift" known as Eurolift, to ensure the WEU can get forces to where they are needed.

"It's the kind of thing that has to be got right if the vision we have of European defence policy is to be realised," a Foreign Office official said.

The meeting will hear how, under the British presidency, the WEU has taken "concrete steps" towards being able to conduct operations at the lower levels of conflict.

Diplomatic sources yesterday said this part of the spectrum was ill-defined but believed the WEU would be able to conduct operations more ambitious than those seen so far - for example, the naval blockade in the Adriatic - but still well short of a big military operation like I-For, which involves 60,000 troops.

The "concrete steps" so far include a security agreement between WEU and Nato which will make it possible for classified information to pass between the headquarters of the two organisations. This is seen as vital to enable the WEU to use Nato forces.

Foreign and defence ministers from the 10 full members of the WEU and 17 other European countries will meet at Birmingham's International Convention Centre next week. But although the end of the year coincides with the end of the current mandate for the Nato-led peace implementation force (I-For) in Bosnia, officials said there was absolutely no way the WEU could take on an operation of that magnitude - even a smaller "post I-For" operation in Bosnia.

The meeting will hear how, under the British presidency, the WEU has taken "concrete steps" towards being able to conduct operations at the lower levels of conflict.

The WEU can draw on Nato communications and resources, but without fully involving the Atlantic Alliance. The main means of doing this is to be the Combined Joint Task Force concept. Nato nations are expected to finalise the details of CJTS at the Nato summit in Berlin on 3 June.

Mongolian fires worsen

IRIA HALASZ
Reuter

Ulan Bator - Mongolian schoolboys joined thousands of soldiers to battle fires whipped up across the steppes by high winds yesterday as one injured teenage firefighter fought for his life in an Ulan Bator hospital.

"This afternoon the winds have been so strong that the fire is spreading in all directions extremely fast," army spokesman Damdinseren said. "The winds have whipped up such a fierce blaze that the firefighters can do nothing more than try to protect camps and cattle," he said.

The remains of three firefighters had been found in the region's Erdenebulag county, lying near their horses, he said. "Only ashes were left."

Scores of fires have roared across Mongolia's steppes, 250 to 300 miles from the capital, in the past three weeks. The latest deaths raised the toll to 19, with 60 injured. The fires have left 700 people homeless and destroyed about 30,000 square miles of forests and pastureland. About 6,000 cattle, the lifeline of Mongolia's nomadic herders, have been killed.

A total of 5,800 people were trying to hold back seven fires and all the oldest schoolboys had been deployed to join soldiers and locals in combating the blazes, Damdinseren said.

Firefighter Batmoenkh, 16, lay in hospital fighting for life after suffering 90 per cent burns as he battled a huge blaze in Batsumber county, about 40 miles north of the capital.

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The record Hoddie has to beat: how England managers compare



Walter Winterbottom

Alf Ramsey

Joe Mercer

Don Revie

Ron Greenwood

Bobby Robson

Graham Taylor

Terry Venables

Manager	Career	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Record*	European best	World best	Highs
Walter Winterbottom	1946-62	139	78	33	28	67.99%	didn't enter	54 & '62: quarter finals	Quality coach. Insisted on skills training.
Alf Ramsey	1963-74	113	69	27	17	73.01%	'68: semi-finals	1966 World Cup Final victory, knighthood followed	
Joe Mercer	1974	7	3	3	1	64.29%	'68: Champions	Charmed media	
Don Revie	1974-77	29	14	8	7	62.07%	'76: didn't qualify	Difficult to identify one really	
Ron Greenwood	1977-82	55	33	12	10	70.09%	'80: first round	Oligified, thoughtful, team played good football	
Bobby Robson	1982-90	95	47	30	28	65.26%	'88: first round	Got to the 1990 World Cup semi-finals	
Graham Taylor	1990-93	38	18	13	7	64.47%	'92: first round	N/A	
Terry Venables	1994-96	16	7	8	1	68.75%	'94: didn't qualify	Great coach, respected by players	
	1946-96	492	269	134	89	66.99%	'68: third overall		
							'66: Champions		

*Record based on win=2 points, draw=1 point, loss=0 points. The manager's record equals total points as a percentage of highest possible total points.

Bob Summers and Claire Alfie

Say a little prayer

Jim White offers Glenn Hoddle a crash course on the worst job in English football

1. Don't Do What Graham Taylor Did...
... and wear, while pacing the touchline, a tracksuit apparently several sizes too small for you. The way the garish nylon fabric of 'The Turnip's outfit failed to disguise his ill-disciplined contours was an irresistible metaphor for England under his tutelage: a nation brought low by inadequate tailoring. As a role model for Hoddle, Taylor offers so many lessons. He can learn all he needs to know about his new job by studying whatever Taylor did and doing the opposite.

Taylor was as far out of his depth he needed an aqua lung. It was a tale of comic-tragic humiliation, punctuated by pal philosophising and inarticulate rages. "For the record," announced a Channel 4 press notice about *The Impossible Job*, a fly-on-the-wall documentary record of Taylor's reign, "to film Mr Taylor after 38 fucks, three craps, two shits and there is an obscured wanker." Not that Hoddle would ever contemplate allowing his anywhere near his wall. Contemptuous at best in his dealings with the media, the new England manager is capable of freezing a reporter's note book at 40 paces. Cosy chats and indiscretions briefings are not his way, the media will be kept at arm's length.

2. Do What Bobby Robson Did...
... and allow senior players in on tactics. Hoddle, in his shrewd coralling of Ruud Gullit's nous at Chelsea, has already proved prepared to listen. Though whether he will ever go as far as Robson in the 1990 World Cup and delegate responsibility for team tactics to his players is unlikely. During that tournament, Robson, dewy-eyed and emotional as always, allowed himself to be persuaded by a clique of senior players that they needed a sweeper system. He let them get on with it and they did. In the semi-final, if only one of the lads had suggested some penalty-taking practice as well.

3. Don't Do What Don Revie Did...
... and treat the players like children. Revie, also known as Don Readies for his partiality to a filled brown envelope, believed the England set-up should be one big happy family, a unit in which he cast himself as the father figure. The temptations facing English footballers are many, various and seldom resisted, but making them indulge in carpet bowls, bingo and quiz nights is unlikely to help their preparation. International players do not need to be treated as if they have only recently graduated from nappies. Unless they are Paul Gascoigne.

4. Do What Joe Mercer Did...
... and make them play with a smile on their faces. He was only manager for a couple of months, in the interregnum between Alf Ramsey and Don Revie, but the former Manchester City manager transformed England. "Go out and enjoy yourselves" was the extent of his team talks. The nervous, cowed remnants of the team that had fallen to the clown-like Poles in World Cup qualification suddenly started to look world-beaters, stroking the ball around with abandon. Mind you, it was only against Wales.

5. Don't Do What Ron Greenwood and Bobby Robson Did...

... and play their best player out of position. For 10 years England possessed a midfield playmaker capable of turning a match, a player whose skill would have stopped the traffic in Rio. Greenwood and Robson squandered his talent. In the 53 games he played for England, just once was he used in the role he had at his club, that of a floating Bond-like, go-anywhere assassin. His name: Glenn Hoddle.

6. Do What Terry Venables Did...

... and stick with your team. Don't be swayed by the press. Given the unaccustomed luxury of not having to qualify for a tournament, Venables has spent the lead up to Euro 96 wisely. Spurning the pundits who suggest English players are too stupid to adapt, Venables has developed a

system far more likely to work in international football than the up-and-at-em rush favoured by, for instance, Graham Taylor. Just a shame Matt Le Tissier was never one of his favourites.

7. Don't Do What Terry Venables Did...

... and indulge in a bit of business on the side, fall out with your old club chairman and spend more time in the dock than the QE2. Don't make your mates in the press members of your night club, and then forget to tell the bloke from the *Mirror* he's invited too. Don't pick agent Eric Hall's cleats in your squad, move from the BBC and Des Lynam to ITV and Bob Wilson, appear as the butt of a Walker's crisps commercial, and wear a pepper-and-salt coat that blends seamlessly with your hair.

And never ever allow the records you cut as an impressionable wannabe pop singer to be re-released. Hoddle is on even more dodgy ground here than his predecessor. Venables' re-issued crime was a minor one - "My Way" sung in Catalan - Hoddle has a jangling skeleton in his cupboard: "Diamond Lights", his sub-Spandau Ballet hit recorded with Chris Waddle. Please, Glenn, let it rest in peace.

8. Don't Do What Alf Ramsey, Graham Taylor and Don Revie Did...

... and fail to qualify for the World Cup. Nothing encourages the critics like failure. Part of the job as England manager is contending with some of the most vicious abuse known to man. Don Revie was vilified for running away to the desert. Bobby Robson for his philandering. Terry Venables for his financial dealings and Graham Taylor for being Graham Taylor. But the worst abuse they have suffered is after failure, when they are subjected to trial by bad pun: "Desert Prat" Robson was called

after a draw with Saudi Arabia: "Swedes 2 Turnips 1" was the headline after Taylor's England were defeated by Sweden; "Yanks 2 Flanks 0" after failure against the Americans. As a nation we still fondly believe we should be involved at the highest level; we cannot tolerate being left out of the World Cup. The stinging pain of sitting at home during a major tournament, with the television commentators assuming we want to cheer on Scotland or, worse, Ireland, the awful humiliation of seeing Costa Rica qualify ahead of us, is not something the average newspaper headline writer forgets in a hurry.

9. Do What Sir Alf Ramsey Did...

... and win

the World Cup. Nothing silences the critics like victory.

10. Do What You Always Do...

... and pray. As the new manager of England you will need all the help you can get.

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Taking the dawg's name in vain

Politics, desertion, muckraking, and now courtroom drama - it may be a dog's life, but for the late President Mitterrand's black labrador, Baltique (below), it's never dull. This morning,

France's favourite pooch finds herself back in the news - at the centre of a Parisian courtroom row, billed "Baltique vs Baltique".

Having tugged at French heartstrings when she followed her master's coffin from the church in the cemetery in January, Baltique was then very publically dumped by Mitterrand's widow.

Now, the poor dog is caught in a tussle between two publishers - each of which has published a book of salacious pseudo-reminiscences about the president's private life. Both books bear a picture of the cuddly hound on the cover - and both purport to be written by "Baltique".

In a fit of pique, the first publisher to poach Baltique's pawprint then announced it was suing the second - claiming copyright on the pseudonym. The case was due in court this morning - but a frantic 11th-hour negotiated settlement looks like keeping both books out of court, and still on sale.

Really, a dog can only take so much. The very suggestion that Baltique - man's best friend, after all - would sell her master's most intimate secrets to some grubby publisher is insult enough.

But then to have the publisher

You're fired. Whoops, no you're not

The new editor Will Hutton may prove to be the golden boy to save the *Observer's* fortunes - but he's certainly going about it a funny way. One of his very first senior appointments, the managing editor, Danny John, has already distinguished himself by sacking several staff - then having to reinstate them promptly, in a farcical case of mistaken identities.

One respected features writer was startled to be called in by Mr John this week, told that, frankly, the boss "didn't rate him", and shown the door. Drowning his shocked sorrows in the local pub,

he was even more startled when a blushing representative of the *Guardian's* editor burst in, hauled him out and marched him back to the office. "There's been a bit of a cock-up, old boy," blustered the red-faced editor, cracking open the mini-bar. "Bit of a misunderstanding. So sorry - you're not fired at all." Good news for the hack in question - but, of course, much reassurance for all the other staff now panicking that the axe was meant for them.

Is nothing sacred?

Chris Patten (right) may still be at the helm, and Hong Kong may not be due to return to the Chinese until next year. But I learn, with great sadness, that the last great bastions of British colonial

ism have already crumbled. This week, the list of goods and services by which the colony measures its inflation rate was published. It is an enlightening litany, and reveals much about Hong Kong's growing cosmopolitan lifestyle. "We have access to so many things," enthuses a government spokesman. "We have more choices." Sadly, in this bold new consumer world, it seems no one is choosing the finest

features of a great British colonial heritage. Some 42 essential items no longer feature on the list - and they include gin, shrimp paste and ox tongue.

Railtrack, we love you

Railtrack staff must be terribly forgetful. How else can one explain the terse memo to employees in East Anglia, issued in response to Wednesday's less than flattering Channel 4 *Dispatches* portrayal?

"It is very pleasant to be pilloried in this way," huffs the memo, "but you know that we are a professional organisation of highly trained staff competently controlling the railway. It is worth remembering that." Of course it is. Next time I am stranded for hours in a great Railtrack cock-up, that's precisely - I'm sure - what I'll remember.

Island life

As bad luck, bad taste and bad timing go, a full-page travel ad in one of the colour supplements last Sunday took some beating. Under the headline "Island maniacs", it read: "This treasure island has far more to offer than the notorious Tasmanian Devil. Shame really it's all most people associate with the place."

Eagle Eye



Anything they can do, we Cannes do too

Proof, if one were needed, that the British film industry is back on its feet: we have finally mastered the glutinous art of the full-on, Hollywood-inspired beano. This morning, the flawlessly fashionable Sobe House, private watering hole for London's movie movers and shakers such as Ewan McGregor and Rita Fitzgerald (above), is packing up and shipping out to Cannes. For the duration of the film festival, owners, staff and members will enjoy the full benefit of their favourite club, relocated on a chartered motor yacht. "We thought," explains the manager, Matthew Hoobermann, "we really shouldn't let our members their usual service, just because they are away in Cannes." Oh, obviously. Such selflessness!

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Mr Howard is playing with fire

I hardly even counts as news: "Courts overrule Howard - again. We have heard this story so many times before. Rarely a month passes without Michael Howard the Home Secretary being found by the judiciary to have abused his powers. In March the immigration board told him he couldn't exile the Saudi dissident Al-Mas'ari to Dominica. In February, the European Court of Human Rights said independent review boards - and not the Home Secretary - should decide whether a young killer is safe to be released once his minimum sentence has been served. In September he was found guilty of injustice over parole applications by IRA prisoners. The list goes on and on.

Yet even in this long list Mr Howard's clash with the judges over the sentences for the killer of little James Bulger was bound to be special. The High Court ruled yesterday that the Home Secretary was wrong to set a minimum sentence of 15 years for the two children convicted of murdering James three years ago.

It isn't hard to see how an injustice could be done. Richard Thompson and Jun Venables were only 10 years old when they killed the two-year-old James. The trial judge detained them "at Her Majesty's pleasure" and recommended that they serve at least eight years. The Lord Chief Justice hid the minimum sentence up to 10 years. Higher, higher, hollered the crowd: 300,000 people signed a petition and 20,000 Sun readers sent the Home Secretary coupons demanding longer sentences for the boys. Ever ready to please his public, Mr Howard settled on 15.

Whose genes are we exploiting?

Twins are becoming big business. They are being studied by economists who are trying to work out how much influence education has upon employment prospects. Psychologists find them indispensable in the study of mental disorders such as schizophrenia. But where they are most useful and most lucrative is in the rapidly expanding industry of genetics.

The genes of identical twins are the resource base for the most effective studies designed to isolate nature from nurture, genetic influences from environmental factors. Yesterday more than a thousand twins gathered for a party hosted by doctors researching the genetic causes of a range of chronic diseases. The researchers are aiming for 5,000 participants. This could be a hugely valuable data bank.

Identical twins share 100 per cent of their genes. If they live apart it should be possible to work out whether any illnesses they suffer are the result of their lifestyles or their genetic inheritance. This in turn should help to develop cures.

The savings to the health service could be huge. Already researchers at St Thomas's hospital in London have identified genetic factors which might make women's bones more brittle in middle age, a condition known as osteoporosis. Two million people in the UK, 80 per cent of them women, suffer from osteoporosis. One in three women and one in 12 men have a fracture by the age of 70. The annual cost of the disease to the health service is estimated at £750m.

The St Thomas's team wants to move on to study obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure and asthma. So the potential health benefits of this data bank may be vast. But so too might be the profits of the genet-

ics companies which exploit the research. The rights to one gene that is thought to influence obesity were sold last year for \$70m. The value of the St Thomas's data bank could run to hundreds of millions of pounds. The rights to exploit the data bank have been sold to a company called Gemini International, whose headquarters are in the British Virgin Islands.

To free-marketeers, the exploitation of such a gene data bank might pose any troubling questions. Private-sector companies are taking a risk by investing in the research; they should reap the rewards.

But this research is not quite like other pharmaceuticals research. Human beings are not just being used to test drugs; their lives matter and are being developed to help drugs. The ownership of the treatments developed by genetic research is hugely controversial.

But this is no simple story of private-sector exploitation, far from it. The St Thomas's team turned to private investment because they had to; public-sector grants had dried up. Several leading geneticists have left Britain in the past year because there is not enough money to fund their research; private finance is the only way to get their results into the international marketplace.

The issue of who owns the rights to genetic discoveries will not go away; it will become more pressing. A review of British legislation would be helpful but only up to a point: this is an international issue.

Rulings by the International Court of Justice, the European Patent Convention or indeed the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade are needed to help clear it up before the "gene prospectors" give the industry a bad name.



The morning after

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

No justification for sheep slaughter

Sir: Paul Field's excellent article (29 April) on the disgusting treatment of sheep in the French ritual slaughter last weekend revealed horrors that should have no place in a civilised society. In June 1995, I wrote to the Minister of Agriculture about last year's almost identical slaughter. The reply I received from the Ministry of Agriculture was predictably complacent:

The French authorities have told us that special arrangements were made for field slaughter, under veterinary supervision, to meet the demands of the Muslim community. The French authorities work closely with Muslim organisations and welfare organisations throughout the year to improve standards of slaughtering and to control this activity... Provided that proper welfare standards are in place, there is no reason why animals should not be transported to France... The Minister does not think that there has been any suggestion that the sheep's welfare has been adversely affected during their journey to France.

It is hard to relate the scenes in the "killing fields" to "proper welfare standards", just as it is difficult to imagine worse "stan-

dards of slaughtering" than those described in your article.

When we see evidence of such

blatant and cruel defiance of EU animal welfare legislation, what confidence can any thinking person have in the sham welfare regulations in the EU or the claims of this government to take animal welfare issues seriously?

Live exports should be banned, and strenuous and committed efforts be made to ensure that all sentient beings are treated with the humanity they deserve.

Dr AMANDA VANCE
West Chiltington,
West Sussex

Sir: There is little theological justification for Muslims all over the world to sacrifice sheep at the time of the *hajj* in Mecca (report, 29 April). The Holy Koran only says: "Accomplish the Pilgrimage... but if you are hindered then make whatever offering is easy..." (2:196). When the Prophet of Islam made the sacrifice in Medina, it was because he was physically prevented by his enemies from making the Pilgrimage.

Some time ago, the Saudi Arabian government stopped pilgrims from making their own sacrifice. Instead they now give money to pay for sheep to be

slaughtered, hatched and frozen in a processing plant near Mecca, and for the meat to be sent to poor countries. The logical next step will be for the pilgrims' money to be used to pay for food aid to these same countries. That would put an end to the suffering of hundreds of thousands of Australasian sheep currently transported across the Indian Ocean each year to die in Arabia.

Now that the pilgrims in Mecca no longer sacrifice sheep with their own hands, it seems only a matter of time before Muslims elsewhere cease to be expected to do so.

P J STEWART
Oxford

Sir: John Mole (Letters, 1 May) is right in so far as the ritual

slaughter of sheep referred to in

the report is a barbarous Old Testament with implications for three religions, not just Islam.

What he fails to ask is how any

such slaughter can be justified for

religious purposes. The Buddha

condemned all blood sacrifice,

outright millennia ago, but it

seems that the so-called "religions of the Book" are still in the

Dark Ages in such matters.

D W EVANS
Leeds

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comment

Watch Atlanta win the jobs race

The Olympics, like everything else in the city, have been planned with commerce in mind

We are going to hear a lot more about Atlanta in the next few weeks; indeed by the time the Olympics are through we may feel we know rather more than we want to about the place. If so, that would be a pity, for a visit there earlier this week has convinced me that other cities around the world have a great deal to learn from Atlanta.

At the moment, all seems chaos. The Olympic Park in the city centre, which will be the focal point of the celebrations, is a sea of mud and bulldozers. Shopfitters are working 18 hours a day to finish the new shops at the airport. But construction being what it is, you would expect a last-minute scramble and there is no reason to doubt that come July the place will be ready. Atlanta is accustomed to growth.

On the simple measure of job creation, it is the most successful city in the US. Other cities can probably learn something useful from the way it has handled the games; but they can learn something even more useful if they can understand how the city has been so successful in creating permanent employment.

The job numbers are stunning. The city – or rather the metropolitan district, for the city centre has a population of only 400,000 while the district is now 3.7 million – has been creating between 40,000 and 100,000 net new jobs a year since the beginning of the 1990s: more than half a million jobs in the past decade. It is creating jobs faster than much bigger cities, like

Chicago. So the Olympic Games will hit an economy that is already growing very fast.

This is crucial to understanding the likely impact of the games on the economy. Hosting the Olympics can be anything from an economic catastrophe, loading future generations with unpaid debts (Montreal), to giving a solid boost (Barcelona), or perhaps not having any notable effect either way (Los Angeles). The trick is not just to make the games pay in themselves, but rather to use them to stimulate more lasting growth. Atlanta has almost certainly succeeded in the first, but achieving the second goal matters more.

There were two principles behind the Olympic strategy. The first was to use existing facilities wherever possible, as Los Angeles did. So to create the Olympic Village, they took over two-thirds of the campus of Georgia Tech, the technical college a couple of miles from the city centre. Soccer, softball, baseball, judo, gymnastics and some other sports all use existing facilities at Georgia Tech, Georgia State University, or other venues around the country.

This self-evidently cuts the costs, but it does not leave a legacy of new facilities. So the second principle was, when building anew, only to build for use after the games. If the permanent need were different from the temporary one, they built for the former, then adapted it for the latter.

The best example of this is the new stadium. It will be used by the Atlanta



HAMISH McRAE

The city is drivingly pro-business and has been for 30 years

Braves. But they only wanted a 40,000-seater, while the Olympics need 80,000 seats. So the stadium has been designed for the baseball team's needs in the newly fashionable "retro" style, but for the Olympics it will have the extra capacity, which will subsequently be ripped out. Another example is the aquatic facilities, which will be used by the Tech and will have 4,000 seats; but capacity will be more than doubled for the games by adding temporary seats. The location is not ideal and there will be traffic jams; but that is surely better than building the ideal pools for the games and then having them in the wrong place ever after.

The finances? The Olympic committee is spending \$1.7bn, and it has said it will not make a loss, though it is not forecasting a profit. Presumably, on a narrow accounting, the sums will

show some kind of modest plus. From the point of view of the local economy, however, there will be a considerable profit because of the additional money brought into the state.

The most thorough study of that, *The Economic Impact on the State of Georgia of Hosting the 1996 Olympic Games*, by Jeffrey Humphreys and Michael Plummer, puts a \$5.1bn ticket on the whole event. That is made up of \$2.6bn of direct and indirect spending and a further \$2.5bn of spending by visitors from 1991 through to 1997.

Beyond even that is the visibility Atlanta will attract from worldwide, wall-to-wall TV coverage for 17 days. That is very hard to quantify. If things go well, it is likely at the margin to attract more inward investment into the state. Georgia already is second only to California in the number of Japanese companies established there.

I suspect that, when the dust settles, there will be some net economic gains over and above the new facilities that will have been built. But since the city is doing so well anyway, all that will have happened is that it will have grown a bit faster than it otherwise would have done. Several residents I met talked of the games "putting Atlanta on the map". But if you are the headquarters of Coca-Cola and CNN, and have people like Whitney Houston and Elton John living there (Mick Jagger also has a pad), you are pretty much on the map already.

Indeed from the point of view of economic strategy, the most interesting thing about the Atlanta region is

the breadth of the base. It has got itself into a string of growing sectors and has no "smoke-stack" legacy. Having soft drinks and media is a good start. Being a centre for sports personalities is immensely helpful. Atlanta is the new hot city for the record industry. It has the second busiest airport in the world (after O'Hare in Chicago – Heathrow is only the busiest for international passengers). But it also has middling manufacturers, many from abroad, attracted by the general pro-business climate.

And that is the key to understanding Atlanta. It is determinedly, drivingly pro-business and it has been for the past 30 years. The Olympics is driven by business. Tax and spending policies are driven by business. Even policies on race are driven by business as captured in the slogan "The city too busy to hate". Atlanta has made a determined effort to curb racial tensions and has probably managed these less badly than any other large US city.

Inevitably there will be costs in the rapid growth that this business-first attitude has created. The building boom has meant that Atlanta is a beach island in an already hot state. There are problems with sewage. There is a lot of concern about the quality of the public schools. Crime is high.

But if you want jobs, as you watch the Olympics, remember you are watching one very visible example of how the US city most strongly driven by business interests goes about ... its business.

Bad children can get better

The court ruling against Michael Howard in the Bulger case is a victory for justice, argues Allan Levy

The High Court ruling yesterday against Michael Howard's decision to set a 15-year minimum term to be served by the boys who killed Jamie Bulger in 1993 was a victory for those advocating that children should not be treated as adults.

The judgment firmly recognises that special considerations apply to the children in the criminal justice system. This is so even if they have been responsible for appalling criminal acts.

In particular the judges ruled that the sentence given to Jon Venables and Robert Thompson, detention during Her Majesty's Pleasure, must not be equated with mandatory life imprisonment given to an adult convicted of murder. The court said that it could not accept that in the case of an offender aged 10 or 11 the Home Secretary was permitted to fix a tariff of 15 years at the outset, as if the offenders were an adult.

This approach is entirely consistent with the Government's international obligations to consider the special position of the child under, for instance, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and, by analogy with the civil as opposed to criminal sphere, the principles set out in the much heralded Children Act of 1989. Indeed, the court's decision rationalises what has been seen by many commentators as an inherent contradiction in the Government's fundamental approach to children and young people. The duty of the Home Secretary, as laid down by the court, is to keep an open mind in respect of the future detention of children who have received an indeterminate sentence and to keep under review the whole question of the length of the loss of liberty.

The court emphasised that any review is entitled to encompass a punishment and deterrence element, together with the risk to the public and public confidence. The age of the offender was clearly an important factor, as the Home Secretary recognised when making his flawed decision. However, the mental and physical changes that will inevitably occur to any child of 10 or 11 must be central to any decision. The different considerations regarding the child as opposed to the adult can also be seen in the question of the effect of deterrence, which raises different questions in the case of a very young offender from those in the case of an adult.

The point was made that

there is nothing new in having regular reviews of detention for children. The court was shown instructions given to prison governors as long ago as 1949. These called for reports 12 months after the sentence was passed and then at yearly intervals. This is, of course, inconsistent with an approach of fixing a long term at the outset of the sentence with a first review only three years before the minimum period of detention ends.

The approach of the court is surely reasonable and understandable and what Parliament clearly intended in its legislation going back to 1908, when it abolished the death penalty for children and emphasised

The likely effect is that the system of setting a tariff will fall into disuse

The importance of rehabilitation and preventive aspects. As the recent Justice report on children and homicide noted, there is extensive research evidence to demonstrate that important developmental changes continue through the teenage years. There is more self-awareness and self-reflection; additionally, during adolescence, there is a greater tendency to look back with regret and to look ahead with apprehension. Young people become increasingly able to consider the long-term consequences of their actions and tend to think about such consequences more in terms of their own sense of responsibility and a better awareness of the effects of their actions on other people. All these factors point towards continual assessment and evaluation.

It is likely that the effect of the court's ruling is that the system of setting a tariff will fall into disuse, but the court has left it to the Home Secretary to devise new procedures. But his involvement may become academic if the application to Strasbourg on behalf of Jon Venables and Robert Thompson, due to be heard in September, is successful. The outcome may well bring to an end the Home Secretary's role and leave matters where many think they rightly belong: in the hands of the independent judiciary.

The writer is a QC specialising in child law.

Are you ready to downshift?

Downsizing is the spectre that haunts Britain. But there is a new alternative to sweeping job cuts, argues Stephen Bevan

We are experiencing a revolution in the workplace. Delayering, downsizing, redundancies, cutbacks – all have left companies heading for corporate anorexia. The few employees left behind are over-worked and disengaged, fearful for their jobs. They feel little love for employers: survivors wonder when the reaper will take them out. Just when everyone needs to pull together, when loyalty is at a premium, employees are disgruntled, angry and looking to leave.

In short, large companies are heading for big trouble unless they move fast. They are reducing their staffing to a core upon which, ironically, they are far more dependent than ever before. Yet that core has less reason than ever before to remain loyal.

Nowhere is this dilemma more true than in banking, where competition and electronic technology means that thousands of jobs are being shed and will continue to be lost for the next decade. Branches that once teemed with clerks and tellers are empty shells where a few people keep the machines running and provide a human face.

Yet just as the revolution has moved into its bloodiest phase, salvation seems to have appeared. This week, National Westminster Bank announced plans to cut the equivalent of 15,000 jobs, nearly a third of its staff. These days, that's barely news. The real surprise is that the bank proposes to make the cutbacks not by mass compulsory redundancies, but by working-sharing among employees. That means four-day weeks and part-time working for thousands of workers. Not redundancy, but less working.

It sounds like a publicity stunt, a big profit-chasing company suffering a temporary attack of conscience; it is hard for banks, busy celebrating bumper profits, to announce that they are sending thousands of loyal employees on to the dole queue. Here, it seems, is a way to appease bitter staff who have their noses pressed to the window as shareholders feast.

Perhaps. But cynics should take a second look at what NatWest is



Art of living: 'downshifting' – working part time – would give fathers the chance to spend more time with their children

Tony Buckingham

proposing. The bank's cost-saving measures could in fact be the pattern of the future, the blueprint of how big companies will cut their costs, while at the same time preserving some sense of stability, loyalty and well-being among their employees. It may well be that the brutal days of simple downsizing are numbered, and that the smart company of the future will instead opt for "downshifting", reducing the hours their employees work.

This trend is already becoming established in the United States. The Lincoln Electric Company, for example, recently promised employees with more than three years' service that they would not be laid off through lack of work. This dispensation has required some short-time working and a re-allocation of work. But it is based on the belief that "relief from anxiety over job security frees people to do their best work".

In California, New United Motor Manufacturing (NUMMI), a Toyota-General Motors joint venture, has guaranteed job security in return for a reduction in the number of job layers and for more flexible working practices. This has resulted in increased trust between management and work-

force. And "trust", as Francis Fukuyama, the American commentator, argues in his latest bestseller, is the gel that holds together organisations which may in a short space of time see rapid changes in their employees, their consumers and their share ownership. It is clear that companies such as NatWest have clearly recognised that (leaving aside issues of ethics, public relations and a new industrial relations agenda, all of which are important) it makes sound business sense to take radical steps to make the changes necessary in their business to build up trust, motivation and confidence in their remaining employees.

Such a view of enlightened self-interest in other companies might well be welcomed by many employees. There is a growing voice in favour of a more forgiving workplace that can allow people to give their non-working lives more of a priority. Men – particularly fathers – have joined the chorus of complaint against the ever-longer working hours that seem to be the price of career advancement or of being able to stand still and avoid redundancy. One telling statistic is that a third of fathers of young children work more

than 50 hours a week. Downshifting also offers opportunities to groups to whom the workplace has been inflexible. Women returning to employment, people with caring responsibilities for children or elderly relatives, older workers and people with disabilities might all benefit from a move away from the traditional model of full-time work, which conventional downsizing has tended to reassert. So, if NatWest blazed a trail for other companies to follow, it might receive the thanks of not just its own staff.

But a sceptical eye should be cast upon moves to worksharing and the redistribution principle. It will be less welcome among those who actually need a full-time salary and for those who regard having a full-time job as critical to their psychological well-being and self-esteem. Reductions in working time, without a concomitant increase in feelings of job security might do little for individual confidence or a consumer-led recovery.

The biggest question mark against seeing downshifting as the nirvana, the long-awaited humanising of inevitable cost-cutting, springs from the fact it is driven by business imperatives rather

than the desires of the workforce. The practice may make sense in the short run to companies such as NatWest that cannot afford to traumatising their structures with the scale of job cuts which the economics of their industry demand. But in the longer term, they may think that they have little choice other than to cut their workforce and consolidate the company around a much smaller staff. If this is the long-term outcome, and staff recognise it as such, then downshifting will soon be rumoured as a con, a device cynically used to manipulate employees to the company's advantage without offering them any long-term security. Such a result will do little to establish that rate and fast-disappearing glue – trust and loyalty – that is now needed more than ever to help companies through rocky and uncertain times ahead.

NatWest may be pioneering a bold, imaginative way forward. But the bank may still have a lot to prove to employees whom the Nineties turned into cynics.

The writer is associate director of the Institute for Employment Studies at the University of Sussex.

THE DAY THE MUSIC DIED...



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REMEMBER ARTHRITIS RESPECTS NOBODY

So, you wanted to be a local councillor ...

Yesterday's winners face nightly meetings, crank calls, the odd bouquet among the brickbats. Stephen Molyneaux has some tips

Councillors have tried to dissuade you from standing for the council, nothing can prepare you for the scale of the task you have taken upon yourself. When I was told it would mean going to meetings every night of the week, I thought this was an exaggeration. Little did I know that I would find myself trying to go to two, three or more meetings a night and still end up feeling guilty about the one I'd missed. By becoming a public figure whose address and phone numbers are openly available for inspection, you find your home life subjected to some unbelieveable intrusions. Although I've

discovered how to deal with the odd telephone call from drunk British National Party members, it is harder to know what to say to some lonely old lady whose entire social life appears to consist of ringing up councillors at two o'clock in the morning. If the Town Hall offers to lend you an answering machine, you'd be wise to accept.

People imagine that councillors get paid for all this, and it is true we all get attendance allowances for committee and council meetings. Yet receiving £22.50 for a day off work or an evening's work is hardly adequate remuneration for the toll that con-

cil duties can impose on your professional and domestic life.

The rewards of being a councillor are to be found elsewhere. When you are stopped on your way round the supermarket and thanked for helping a family to rearrange their debts before a loan shark called round or the bailiffs turned up, you know why you carry on. Opening a new children's playground or a primary school in your ward can be equally rewarding as you see dry committee minutes translated into facilities that are managed and used by the local community.

If I could send one message to

everyone who was elected last night, it would be to enjoy your hard-won victory and the service you give to your borough, but try to set aside one night of the week for those near to you.

Remember that most hard-working councillors are quickly forgotten when they come off the council, even if their council's achievements and failures remain visible for decades. While it lasts, however, local politics can be frustrating and bloody hard work. Good luck with the task that you have let yourself in for – there are plenty of surprises and another round of elections awaiting you in four years' time.

The writer is a Labour councillor for the Millwall ward of Tower Hamlets, in east London.

obituaries/gazette

Lord Houghton of Sowerby

On the death of Hugh Galiskell in January 1963, Harold Wilson, then Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, was elected Leader of the Labour Party – and in his place came Douglas Houghton. I was fascinated, as the newest member of the committee, by the genuine respect Houghton elicited from the civil service knights and dames (Mary Smeeton and Evelyn Sharpe), accorded to him not simply as PAC chairman but on account of what the mandarins knew of his past. For some of them Houghton had been a veritable institution of their own profession for over 40 years; for all the accounting officers of the 1960s, he was *quelque un* and far more than simply another politician. Houghton was the pioneer/creator of civil service trade unionism.

In his 1987 autobiography *Time and Chance*, James Callaghan observes that the measure of Houghton's leadership was that he gained the lifelong loyalty and admiration of the membership. "His contemporaries have cheered him all his life as an outstanding leader, who forged their union for them, and achieved conditions which could not have been won without him."

Over an outstanding span of 38 years, from 1922 to 1960, Houghton was General Secretary of the Inland Revenue Staff Federation, which started life as the Association of Officers in Tax Offices (AOTO). This small, but remarkable, trade union managed to attract a 95 per cent voluntary membership without the benefit of a closed shop; and despite the fact that its 10,000 members were scattered in 600 separate towns and offices the length and breadth of Britain. In the informed judgement of Lord Callaghan of Cardiff, who was at the age of 21 elected to the NEC of the union, "This was mainly due to the vigour and organisation ability of the General Secretary, Douglas Houghton, who was then a young man in his early thirties."

Houghton was an inspirational innovator, and continued to think constructively until his mid-nineties, as those of us who talked to him, padding around Westminster, can testify.

One of Houghton's inspirations was to fill the gap left by the failure of the Board of Inland Revenue to provide new recruits with any systematic instruction. He decided that a course should be prepared to enable newcomers to pass the qualifying examination for promotion, and with the voluntary aid of other members of the union, a course of tuition covering the syllabus was devised. Houghton then submitted the proposed course to the Inland Revenue Department; he received their informal blessing though they did not officially recommend it to new recruits.

Houghton's tuition course proved a useful bait to draw new members into the AOTO; even those who could find no other reason for belonging to a trade union understood this to be a positive attraction. For 15 shillings, the AOTO was ready to provide new recruits with a six-month correspondence course.

Houghton insisted on a written paper to answer, which arrived regularly once a fortnight, and the provision of a voluntary tutor, allocated to each student, drawn either from within the student's own office or from a nearby town. The dynamo behind this voluntary work was Houghton, and his passion for detailed care was such that the new recruit could hardly fail to pass the examination.

In the 1930s, the Civil Service was rigidly stratified. The clerical class was drawn from the secondary schools; the executive class from the sixth forms of the grammar schools, and the administrative class from the universities. Once a young person was tagged "clerical class", he or she could hardly, if ever, escape and improve themselves by internal means. So, in an age when for many families higher education was an impossible dream, there was a host of young people confined to the clerical class who were quite as able as those in the executive class – and, indeed, some university entrants.

Houghton perceived this situation, and rather than resort to posturing and ranting about the iniquities of the class system, tried to do something constructive about it. He persuaded the Board of Inland Revenue to hold an internal examination that would enable members of the clerical class to be promoted to the tax inspectorate. After much patient negotiation, believing that in life more flies were caught with honey than with vinegar, Houghton persuaded the Revenue to institute an examination from which 10 clerks a year would be selected for promotion.

This examination may seem proverbial been nowdays; it was the opening up of a chink in the rigid system of class stratification of the 1930s which, apart from all else, was to be so inefficient for the country. Houghton was a passionate believer that Britain should be a land of equal opportunity. He also believed that the avenue to success should be kept open, and this was translated into staunch and committed support for Harold Wilson and Jenny Lee, when the Oxford cabinet members were faint-hearted and sceptical about the Open University.

Since I stayed in London within a stone's throw of Houghton's Westminster *pledge*, at Marsham Court, between 1970 and 1974, it was a pleasure for me to walk back with him after late-night votes, none of which, although he was in his mid-seventies, he thought he ought to miss as PLP Chairman. His father and mother, John and Martha, he described as orthodox, Victorian yeomen, for whom he had a lasting affection. At school, his headmaster was Frederick Atenborough, father of Richard and David Atenborough. What changed his life was the First World War, and, in fact to which he seldom referred, experience as a lad, barely turned 18, of the Battle of the Somme. From being a raw 16-year-old school leaver, and apprentice clerk in the local tax office, Houghton was catapulted into the trenches as a Private in the Civil Service Rifles.

Albeit a man of vehement opinions, Houghton had the same attitude as Macmillan – since so many of all backgrounds had laid down their lives together, fellow countrymen were worthy of respect. Cheap abuse, so much the currency of modern politics, Houghton regarded with contempt, and he deplored the behaviour of his own colleagues who indulged in it. "You know," Houghton would say in his gruff voice, "once a lad has

witnessed his teenage contemporaries massacred in Flanders, one really does think that one has some obligation to try and make the world a more 'civilised' [one of Houghton's favourite words] place."

Forty-five years after Houghton was demobbed from the 60th Rifles, it was fitting that the Labour government of Wilson-Callaghan should appoint him to the Royal Commission on Standards of Conduct in Public Life. For Houghton, one of the things that really mattered in life was Good Behaviour. High up in Houghton's pantheon of Bad Behaviour was being petty. Walking back one night, after a particularly frustrating meeting of the PLP, Houghton told me, "If like me you feel you are lucky to be alive, living on borrowed time after the carnage of the Battle of the Somme, you can be forgiven for becoming impatient with pettiness among colleagues!"

It was not without thought that he chose as his motto on his coat of arms when he was made a life peer in 1974 "Bear no base mind". Nor was it an accident that his armorial supporters were badgers, and that the centre-piece should be a barn-owl statant. This reflected his abiding interest in animal welfare, and his vice-presidency of the RSPCA from 1978 to 1982.

From 1941, Houghton had become a household name. In the days when the BBC Home Service was unchallenged, the *Can I Help You?* programme – partly because it certainly could help you – was followed by millions. Perhaps the most effective contributor of all was Houghton. His knowledge of tax in particular, and the government machine in general, was encyclopedic. It was also expressed with a wry, common sense, with something of a rasp. For Houghton a spade was a spade. The advice was sound. And it was not hectoring.

His period as an alderman on the LCC, from 1947 to 1949, forged a link with Herbert Morrison. Albeit Houghton was over 50, saw his life in the Trade Union Movement, and did not entertain parliamentary ambitions, it was Morrison who persuaded him that it was his duty to go forward in the Sowerby by-election. This had been the seat of John Belcher, Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade in the Attlee government, and in the wake of the Lynskey Tribunal into an

episode of what by today's standards would be petty corruption (Belcher was accused of ministerial misbehaviour in relation to spivs and the black market), a candidate of national reputation was required to hold the seat, and Labour's hitherto unblemished record in by-elections.

That, after entering the House of Commons, Houghton became identified neither with the Bevanites nor the Gaitskellites, or any of the factions in the fractious Labour Party of the 1950s, is due to the fact that he spent the decade as a busy member of the General Council of the TUC. In addition to remaining General Secretary of the Inland Revenue Staff Federation, Houghton was in the pivotal position of Chairman of the Staff Side of the Civil Service National Whitley Council from 1956 to 1958, at a period of delicate tensions between the public sector and the Macmillan government.

When he embarked on his ministerial career Houghton was already 66 years old. Perhaps it was his innumerate skill at negotiation and compromise, or perhaps it was the fact that he was given the non-job of Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. It is difficult to identify anyone else who could have been so acceptable to the Left, the Trade Union Group, the Loyalists, and indeed the Cabinet itself from which Wilson had gently sacked him at the age of 69. Gruff and pugnacious, Houghton was a broker *par excellence*. It was a measure of his success that it occurred to no one to challenge him, between November 1970 and February



Eric Houghton

els, notably with Boston Town, he was recommended to Aston Villa by an uncle who had once played for the club, signing amateur forms in 1927 and giving up a bakery job to turn professional a year later.

Having been converted into a flanker – Villa were magnificently served in the centre by the revered "Pongo" Waring – Houghton gained rapid promotion to the senior side, uncharacteristically missing a penalty on his debut in January 1930 but impressing generally with his dashing style, his sick manipulation of the ball and, above all, his shooting prowess.

Clearly the eager rookie offered immense promise, but one expected the Houghton star to ascend quite so instantaneously as it did during the season of 1930-31, in which he scored 30 times as Villa finished as First Division runners-up, and he was rewarded by an England call-up. He netted in that game, too, a 5-1 victory over All Ireland, and could count himself unlucky that his prime coincided with that of Arsenal's Cliff Bastin, whose brilliance ended Houghton's international involvement only two years later.

At club level, however, the Villa man continued to flourish, and he played a major part in the club's Second Division championship triumph of 1938.

All the while the Houghton "bowitzer" grew in renown and he became a dead-ball specialist, many of the 170 senior goals he netted before leaving Villa Park in 1946 having come from penalties and free-kicks.

Houghton's new club was lowly Notts County, for whom he played until 1949 when he took over as manager and, with England centre-forward Tommy Lawton at his disposal, led them to the Third Division (South) title in his first campaign at the helm. Three terms of unspectacular consolidation followed before he took the job closest to his heart, that of bossing Aston Villa. Quietly firm, he set about revitalising a once-great club now fallen on mediocre times. He gave youngsters a chance and he spent heavily on well-known recruits, but could not achieve his ambition of mounting a realistic championship challenge.

There was uplifting consolation in 1957, though, when the Villans upset the odds to beat newly-crowned League champions Manchester United in the FA Cup Final, albeit in controversial circumstances after United's goalkeeper was seriously injured. However, hopes that the Wembley victory would inspire a general recovery were dashed and, with his side struggling near the foot of the table,

a sad Houghton was sacked in November 1958.

Thereafter the popular East-countryman joined Nottingham Forest as chief scout and bossed non-League Rugby Town in the early 1960s, before serving Walsall in various capacities, including director. Next he enjoyed a second return to Villa Park, pioneering the club lottery before taking a seat on the board for seven years from 1972, and in 1983 was elevated to senior vice-president.

Houghton – who in his youth had been a sporting all-rounder proficient enough to cricket for Lincolnshire at Minor Counties level and Warwickshire Seconds – retained his fervour for football to the end, watching Villa regularly at senior, reserve and youth level until ill health curtailed his activity during the current season. He never tired of reminiscing with supporters, never refused to sign an autograph, was never less than a perfect gentleman. When Eric Houghton died, Aston Villa lost one of their most loyal servants and an ambassador of immeasurable worth.

Irvin Footing

William Eric Houghton, football player, manager and administrator, born Billingham, County Durham, 29 June 1910; died Birmingham 1 May 1996.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

DEATHS

SWELL: Teresa Mary (née Purnell), died 1 May, peacefully, at home. Funeral on Tuesday 7 May at Battersea Sacred Heart Church, Trout Street, at 11am. All enquiries to Ernest Lamer and Son, 0171-223 5422.

For Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS, please telephone 0171-232 2011 or fax to 0171-232 2010. Charges are £6.50 a line (VAT extra).

ter, social economist, 47; Mr Eddie Lowden MP, 73; Colmene Sir Michael McCorkell, Lord Lieutenant of County Londonderry, 71; Miss Sheila McKechnie, director, Consumers' Association, 48; Sir Christopher MacRae, High Commissioner to Pakistan, 59; Mr Randle Manswaring, poet and author, former insurance broker, 84; Mr Peter Oosterhuis, golfer, 47; Professor Sir Russell Fudge, former MP and chairman, Quality Guaranteed, 72; Sir William Glick, music lecturer and critic, 88; Lt-Gen Sir Michael Gray, defence industries adviser, 64; Sir William Gray, former Vice-Chancellor, Greenwich University, 65; Mr Norbert Singer, former Vice-Chancellor, St James the Less, St Juvenal of Narni, St Philip the Apostle, Si

Philip of Zeil and Saint Timothy and Maura.

Anniversaries

BIRTHS: Niccolò di Bernardo dei Machiavelli, author and statesman, 1469; Richard D'Oyly Carte, operatic impresario, 1844; Golda Meir (Golda Meyerson), Israeli prime minister, 1898; Mary Astor, actress, 1906; Dame Ismay Brundage, president, pillar pierrepont, 1840; Herbert Balfour, critic and playwright, 1945. On this day: Jamaica was discovered by Columbus, 1494; New Zealand was proclaimed a British colony, 1841; the Festival of Britain opened, 1951; the first London production of the musical show *Annie* was staged, 1978. Today is the Feast Day of Saints Alexander, Eusebius and Theodosius, St James the Less, St Juvenal of Narni, St Philip the Apostle, Si

London SW1, in honour of Mr Nikoloz Lekishvili, State Minister of the Republic of Georgia.

Lectures

National Gallery: Colin Wiggins, "Creative Copies" (1); Francis Bacon and Velázquez's *Invocu X*, 1pm.

Exeter University: Pieter van Dijk, "Judicial Protection of Human Rights in Europe: divergence, coordination or integration?", 5.30pm.

Luncheons

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Sir Nicholas Bonar MP, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, hosted a luncheon

held yesterday at Lancaster House, London SW1, in honour of Mr Matthew Parker, Lord Parker, Lady Wilson of Newcastle, Lt-Col Michael Rose, Miss Marie-Louise Ross, Mr and Mrs Spragg, Sir Rodney and Lady Sweetnam, Mr Kevin Taylor, Mr Peter Temple-Morris, M1 and Mrs Temple-Morris, Lady Thynne, Mr and Mrs Sam Tait.

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Kwik Save losing the bean war

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

These are worrying times for Kwik Save, and management's decision to bring in Andersen Consulting to conduct a root-and-branch strategic review only adds to the concerns. Graeme Bowler and his team have tried just about everything in the last few years and nothing has worked. Turning outside for help seems to indicate that they have run out of ideas.

Kwik Save's central problem is an old one now. Its once-secure niche as "Britain's number one discounter" is looking increasingly vulnerable. The superstores are encroaching on Kwik Save's territory, offering equally cheap ranges on commodity products. When Kwik Save cut the price of baked beans to 3p, Tesco matched it. And while the supermarkets park their tanks on Graeme Bowler's lawn, the threat of Continental discounters grows.

Kwik Save says that the only thing that is not up for grabs in the review is its position as a discounter. The question is how to deliver it. A loyalty card looks unlikely as the company does not have the systems. An extension of the range would increase already-mushrooming costs. It looks an unenviable position, which is why analysts were cutting forecasts yesterday and predicting further falls in the share price, even after yesterday's 9 per cent slump from 46p to 42p.

Yesterday's disappointing results showed the same old problems, with a few new ones thrown in. Pre-tax profits were down 28 per cent to £4.2m. Though sales were up 8 per cent (or 1 per cent like-for-like) costs rocketed by 19 per cent.

Part of that rise was due to the company investing in a new distribution centre, re-writing its computer systems and staff training. And though buying terms have improved, pricing pressure on basic items such as beans, tomatoes and corned beef has hit the gross margin. The margin in the first half fell by 0.2 per cent compared with last year. There was also a warning that the margin would fall further in the second half due to continuing tough trading conditions.

Though like-for-like sales are up by 1 per cent since the year end, customer numbers continue to fall after the 3 per cent fall in the first half. The problems have forced the company to rein back its ambitious store opening programme. It will now open only 35 new stores this year, half the planned figure, reducing capital expenditure from £14.5m to £12m.

The Shoprite stores in Scotland and the North-east that were acquired last year are improving but still made a half-year loss of £3m. Kwik Save shares have fallen from more than 700p last summer to yesterday's 42p. But

even with analysts cutting full-year forecasts to £87m, giving a price/earnings multiple of 12, they still enjoy a premium to Tesco and Argyll which is hard to justify. The shares look set to fall further. Sell.

Unilever cleans up its act

Unilever has had a torrid couple of years, highlighted by the group's humiliating withdrawal of its "new improved" Persil Power washing powder. But trading has hardly been inspiring either, reflected in a share price that has underperformed the rest of the market by 11 per cent since the beginning of 1994.

The hope is that things are now going to change, spurred by the root and branch management shake-up being instigated by Niall FitzGerald, set to take over as chairman of the UK side of the Anglo-Dutch group later this year.

The fruits of that could take another three years to come through, so yesterday's first-quarter results showing a

10 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £509m reflected actions taken by the previous regime. On the face of it, that looks a respectable result, given that sales were up only 7 per cent to £7.69bn in the same period.

But the figures were distorted by a number of one-offs. Fingers crossed, there should be no repeat of the £15m charge at Birds Eye Walls to cover the cost of the BSE scare. There was also a £30m adverse swing on exceptions, more than offset by a change in the treatment of stocks in the Liptons tea business in the US, which added £40m to profits.

Stripping that lot out, the picture is more mixed. Past cost savings are starting to show up in Europe, where margins would have been ahead but for the BSE hit, but they still have a long way to go. The US operation is bolding its own against powerful competition, but the real potential for Unilever lies in its operations in Latin America and Asia. Boosted by acquisitions, the former showed underlying profits growth of 30 per cent in the latest three months, with volumes up 9 per cent. Even Asia managed volume growth of

7 per cent.

Unilever's market value is £34.5bn, share price 42.5p

Five-Year record

	1993	1994	1995	1996	6 months
Turnover (£m)	2.29	2.37	2.39	2.45	1.21
Pre-tax profits (£m)	126.1	135.6	125.5	61.6	44.2
Earnings per share (pence)	18.3	19.3	20.0	5.95	5.95
Dividends per share (pence)	18.3	19.3	20.0	5.95	5.95

Shop numbers

Share price (pence)

Source: Bloomberg

around five times that of the US market, which was up just 1 per cent.

Unilever has trailed its rivals in recent years, highlighted by strong first-quarter sales figures from Nestle yesterday. Profits of £2.45bn this year would put the shares, up 60p at £12.10, on a forward p/e of 15. It requires something of an act of faith to believe Unilever will get it right this time, but on balance a risk worth taking. Hold.

City welcomes Maiden placing

The City's appetite for new issues remains undiminished if the warm reception given to outdoor-advertising group Maiden is anything to go by. Maiden, which owns 25,000 poster sites around the country, was expected to be worth at least £55m when dealings start next Tuesday. In the event, a strong level of interest from institutional investors ensured the 9.6 million shares will be placed at 220p, valuing Maiden at a top-of-the-range £88.5m.

The placing will raise £17.9m to repay debts of £37m incurred when chief executive Ron Zeghib bought out venture capital partners Morgan Grenfell Development Capital last year. Directors will retain about 60 per cent of the equity after the flotation.

On one level, Maiden is benefiting from scarcity value. Shares in More O'Ferrall, the only other quoted operator in the sector, have advanced in leaps and bounds on the back of strong growth in UK outdoor-advertising spend, which last year grew by up to 9 per cent. The industry forecasts similar advances this year.

A consolidation of the sector, which last year saw Maiden buy British Transport Advertising for £1.8m, has led to fewer and more professional players in the sector. Site Illuminations, the steady growth in roadside traffic and better audience measurement techniques have also helped. And the increased fragmentation of the television, magazine and radio markets means poster sites could become the only medium capable of delivering mass audiences to advertisers.

How much all this is worth to investors is anybody's guess. More O'Ferrall, the market leader in the UK, stands on a forward p/e of almost 18 times and should command a higher rating thanks to a good track record of organic growth and lower debt levels. Shares in Maiden are tightly priced at 15 times future earnings, but they should still go at a decent premium.

Al first the partnership seemed to be paying off, but pressure on Mr Donaldson undoubtedly grew in January when Holliday issued a surprise profits warning which sent the shares crashing to a new low of 105p – well below the 195p investors paid when the company joined the stock market three years ago.

Although margins are not yet back to satisfactory levels, they are improving, and further benefits will accrue," Holliday said in a statement. It added that while the economy was still un-

certain, the destocking that hit its 1995 sales had finished.

Analysts, who had cut forecasts for this year's profits from £24m to £14m following the recent warning, welcomed the news but expressed little surprise that trading was well above the levels seen in the second half of last year.

They added that the improvement reflected measures taken to reduce costs and new products from Holliday's pharmaceutical business in Spain.

IN BRIEF

• House prices rose by a seasonally adjusted 0.7 per cent in April, their ninth consecutive monthly rise, Halifax said yesterday. Over the year to April house prices rose by 2.7 per cent, leaving them at roughly the same level as two years ago. Halifax said that if there was another rise in May it would raise its annual growth forecast of 2 per cent, but also warned that the Inland Revenue figures for transactions continue to indicate a fragile market.

• The Treasury launched a public consultation yesterday on its proposal to scrap the legal restrictions on trustees. Instead it is proposing that trustees would be treated as the legal owners of assets able to invest at their own discretion as long as they satisfy normal requirements of due care. Individuals whose money it is would then come under the protection of the Financial Services Act.

• T&N, the auto and engine parts maker, is to take an £8m charge on the sale of assets in Zimbabwe and repeated its warning that growth will slow in the first part of 1996. Sir Colin Hope, chairman, also said the firm would not appeal a landmark asbestos damages case it lost. The case relates to a factory one of its predecessors owned in Armley, a suburb of Leeds. (Bloomberg)

• George Wimpey, Britain's largest housebuilder, said its decision to focus on homebuilding had been vindicated and predicted that it would post better profits this year than it did last year. Joe Dwyer, chairman, said both Wimpey and McLean's sales were similar to 1995, although they have improved during the last three weeks. Sales in the US were up 50 per cent from last year, in line with its expectations, and Australian sales were up 30 per cent. Wimpey said integration of McLean Homes, which Wimpey swapped with Tarmac plc in exchange for its minerals business, is going well. (Bloomberg)

• At least 10 million Chinese will own mobile phones by the year 2000, according to the official Post and Telecommunications Daily. Cellphone subscribers numbered 1.5 million in 1995 compared with 50,000 in 1991. Sales of telecommunications goods, including phones and pagers, is likely to reach £1.7m a year over the next five years.

• Bank of Scotland cut the annual percentage rate on its Classic Visa and MasterCard credit cards by 2 percentage points to 18.5 per cent, effective from 1 June. It said this will make RBS' card rates as the lowest among the credit cards issued by the UK high street banks.

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Baillie Gifford (I)	24.0m (28.3m)	0.77m (0.32m)	0.88p (0.02p)	nil (-)
Bailey (I)	125m (114m)	12.3m (13.8m)	7.4p (8.5p)	2.55p (2.45p)
Body Shop (F)	257m (220m)	32.7m (33.5m)	8.8p (11.5p)	3.4p (2.4p)
The Body Shop (F)	114m (106m)	-3.04m (-0.15m)	-4.19p (-0.27p)	1.3p (1.3p)
Kwik Save (I)	1.84bn (1.70b)	44.2m (51.6m)	18.45p (28.3p)	5.85p (5.95p)
Latex-Scan (F)	7.34m (7.13m)	-0.22m (-0.17m)	-1.2p (-0.29p)	nil (-)
Unilever (O)	7.68bn (7.19b)	507m (483m)	17.11p (16.04p)	nil (-)
(F) - First (O) - Interim (R) - First quarter				

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Tarmac set to face the future with a green T

CITY DIARY

JOHN WILLCOCK

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Tom Rubython three weeks ago, continues to be far more enthralling than Brookside. Jason Nissé, associate editor of Sunday Business and former writer for the Independent, among others, has resigned after just two issues.

Mr Rubython described it yesterday as "an amicable resignation... it's not un-amicable". Delroy Alexander, a reporter who came from Investors Chronicle, has also handed in his notice and intends to go to Jamaica to join the Jamaica Gleaner, a newspaper.

Mr Rubython dismissed as "absolute rubbish" reports that Sunday Business had received new funding from Century 2000, a northern service group. Since the original backers pulled out in the week before the launch Owen Oyston, the socialist millionaire, has provided finance, but that was just for the launch, Mr Rubython said.

So was Mohammed Al Fayed, the Harrods boss and potential politician. In the frame to buy the paper? "No," according to Mr Rubython. How about rumours that staff had not been paid? "They have been paid – they wouldn't be here otherwise," he said.

Meanwhile Mr Nissé will have his leaving drinks this evening, just three weeks since the launch. Tune in next week for another gripping instalment...



Abba: Not Norwegian, unlike camel exports

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"It was like coming home," she said. "When I realised that

behaviour of the school directors breached the 1976 Euro-

pean Convention on Human Rights, I thought, 'This is what we have to amend legislation.'

birth certificates and passports." In addition, IRA weapons

shocks



COMMENT

The wave of Baby Bell mergers in the US is creating a whole new raft of major telecommunications companies. As in so many other industries, Britain may well have to reconcile itself to the second and third divisions.

Do the collapse of takeover talks between British Telecom and Cable & Wireless mark for Britain at least, the end of the mega-merger era? BT's brief and less than helpful explanation – that the risks outweighed prospective opportunities – certainly had that feel to it. Combine it with the Government's statement that the golden share in National Power and PowerGen is there to be used (more on that later), and it may well be that we are witnessing the end of the present wave of consolidating mergers in industry, finance and the utilities.

Some mergers, it appears, are just too ambitious and difficult to do, whatever the supposed industrial logic. All businesses dream of subsuming their competitors to create the dream team, powerful and ready enough to take on the world. But when the practicalities are examined closely enough, it often proves impossible.

In this particular case it was a combination of pricing, regulatory and international partnership issues that finally saw the deal. Rod Olsen, C&W's acting chief executive, describes it as "a fruit cocktail" of problems, many of them so intractable that it made no sense to carry on. While the BT negotiations continued, Cable & Wireless became frozen in time, unable to pursue business opportunities with anyone else.

BT puts a rather different spin on events. For BT it was not so much the regulatory issues that sank the deal as the difficulty of persuading C&W to agree a realistic price.

Nonsense, say C&W. We never got round to discussing price. As always, the truth probably lies somewhere between. Plainly there was a price at which the deal could have been done but it was not one that C&W was prepared to contemplate. Valuing the two businesses for the purposes of merger was in any case made that much harder by the regulatory uncertainty BT faces in its own home market. Investment bankers came to believe they were dealing with a constantly moving target.

Whatever the truth, it seems a shame. Here was an opportunity to create a company with the critical mass to be up there with the best in the world. The wave of Baby Bell mergers in the US is creating a whole new raft of giant telecommunications companies. As in so many other industries, Britain may well have to reconcile itself to the second and third divisions. BT at least has a fall-back strategy to put it in the first. C&W doesn't even have that. Its new chief executive, whoever that may be, has quite a task on his hands.

Lang performs a double somersault

Another day, another hopelessly confusing message from the printing presses around at the Department of Trade and Industry. In as far as it is now worth even attempting to interpret the words of Ian

Lang, the Government's decision to retain its golden shares in National Power and PowerGen appears to put the kibosh on any prospect of a transatlantic bid from Southern Company of Georgia.

The thinking goes something like this:

when we decided not to let the two generators buy regional electricity companies last week we thought we'd made it plain that vertical integration was off the menu.

But then you get along in your transit van to Nat Power's register and take away 40 boxes full of shareholder information. Obviously what we saying was too subtle. Well here it is with both barrels. The businesses

ain't for sale.

The other interpretation, of course, is that

National Power is for sale providing the bid is bold enough to create adequate competition in the generating market by breaking it into several chunks. True this is a minority interpretation, but it is perfectly consistent with the double somersault Mr Lang manages to perform in the space of his eight-line statement.

The Government, for entirely understandable political reasons appears to have linked ownership of the electricity industry with its structure by blocking any bids for the two generators – from whatever quarter – until it is satisfied there is "adequate competition in the generation and supply markets".

It might have been simpler, and more honest, to say we don't want any contested bids

for the two companies with all the attendant bad publicity this side of an election. But then a government supposedly committed to free markets couldn't possibly admit to such a simplistic explanation for using its golden share.

Roddicks give the City the treatment

Anita and Gordon Roddick have come up with a new all-over body treatment, specially formulated for the City. First they flounce investors for putting shareholder value above nobler pursuits like the protection of the Amazonian rain forests. Then they sensitize the skin by waving around the idea of taking the business private. And finally, they apply the soothing balm in the shape of a pledge to raise the payout and reduce dividend cover.

As a means of bringing a glow to the cheeks, a 55 per cent increase in the dividend beats the plunge pool and a brisk working over with beach twigs any day. But whether Body Shop International has found the answer to its uneasy relationship with the investment community is less obvious. Despite their best endeavours, concepts such as "accelerating our dividend growth over and above the rate of earnings" clearly jar with the Roddicks' pre-occupation with ethical capitalism.

The Roddicks' explanation for why they decided not to pursue their desire to take the business private should be taken with a large dose of peppermint foot lotion. The Roddicks are plainly still unhappy running a public company with all the obligations of disclosure that entails. And although Body Shop's shares rose pleasingly yesterday on the crest of the new look policy towards shareholders which recognises the importance of dividend growth, there are plainly problems ahead.

The balance sheet may be ungeared and cash flow may be strong but investors may also wonder where the growth is going to come from to help Body Shop deliver, even with the dividend cover cut back. The US market is a mess, not helped by Body Shop's own green credentials being put under the spotlight.

Four store openings are planned this year than last and while the potential for international expansion may be "huge", it will take more than a few new outlets in the Philippines and South Africa to spread the Roddick gospel around the globe.

In an ideal world, says Gordon, it would have been nice to celebrate the company's 20th anniversary with an increase in profits. In the Roddicks' ideal world there wouldn't be any shareholders, either. For the time being the two will have to rub along together until such time as the Roddicks can persuade the banks that a buyout is feasible, or a big brother comes along that can lift the yoke of public ownership from their shoulders.

Flotation boom: Three companies come to the market and find surprising strength

New issues in demand as flops are forgotten

PATRICK TOOHER

Further evidence that the new issues market is back to rude health came yesterday when three companies revealed strong interest in their flotation plans.

"We were a little surprised," admitted Ron Zeghbi, chief executive of the outdoor advertising group Maiden, which is joining the main stock market next week. "Demand for our shares has been pretty exceptional."

The new issues market has been in the doldrums in recent years after a number of spectacular stock market flops, most notably the computer service group McDonnell Information Systems (MDIS) and the aircraft components manufacturer Aerostuctures Hamble.

But, encouraged by a buoyant stock market, investors have returned to the sector with interest in recent months.

Maiden, which owns 25,000 poster sites around the country, was expected to be worth at least £65m but a placing price of £20m announced yesterday will value the company at £80.5m when dealing in the shares start next Tuesday.

The placing will raise £17.9m to repay debts of £37m incurred when Mr Zeghbi bought out venture capital partners Morgan Grenfell Development Capital last year.

The biopharmaceutical group Vanguard Medica, the largest of the companies to reveal flotation details yesterday, also got a friendly reception in the City. Vanguard said its placing of 11 million shares at 45p was several times oversubscribed.

Estimated net cash proceeds from the placing were around £46.5m – some £10m higher than originally expected.

The new capital from the placing, which values Vanguard at £11.5m, will be used to fund research of existing compounds and the acquisition of new compounds.

Vanguard is building a portfolio of new drug candidates through licensing and collaborative agreements. The company has an existing product line of five compounds, including treatments for migraines and inflammatory conditions. Trading in the shares is also due to begin on Tuesday.

Undoubtedly the highest-profile share launch came in the shape of the lingerie and nightwear specialist La Senza.

It is joining the junior Alternative Investment Market via a placing of 13.3 million shares at 15p each, valuing the company at over £15m and raising £1.5m. La Senza originally hoped to raise to fund expansion to more than 152 outlets over the next five years, compared with



Premium brand: La Senza plans to use funds from its issue to expand its lingerie chain

the 22 it has now. La Senza plans to roll out its premium brand, which is pitched above Marks & Spencer, the dominant player in a British lingerie market worth almost £1.5bn.

La Senza occupies a similar niche to Knickerbox, but the latter is a kiosk operation with

smaller stores concentrating on bras and knickers whereas La Senza offers a wider range of fashion items.

Competition in the sector is

expected to hot up. Last year, Sheffield entrepreneur Stephen Hincliffe's Facia group bought the Contessa chain of women's

lingerie shops and promised to redesign the range and broaden its appeal beyond women over 35.

The La Senza concept was developed by Suzy Shier, a quoted Canadian company which launched shops in the UK at the end of 1994.

Surge in US growth puts Fed on rate alert

RUPERT CORNWELL
Washington

Undeterred by a ferocious winter, government shutdowns and the worst strike at General Motors in a quarter of a century, the US economy expanded far more strongly than expected in the first quarter. The news is an election-year boost for President Clinton, but a signal that the next interest rate move by the Federal Reserve may be an increase rather than a cut.

According to provisional figures from the Commerce Department yesterday, gross domestic product grew by 2.8 per cent, far more quickly than the feeble 0.5 per cent recorded in the last three months of 1995. The strong performance suggests that current forecasts of a bare 2 per cent growth for the year – the IMF last month predicted 1.8 per cent expansion – are decidedly on the conservative side.

The growth seems to have been across the board, led by a surge in consumer spending, up 3.5 per cent, and a 12 per cent jump in fixed corporate investment. The inventory reductions by business which braked the economy in the last part of 1995 also seem to be over, analysts said.

Without the severe weather, including the record blizzard which shut down the North-east for a week in January, and the government lay-offs caused by the protracted budget dispute, growth would have been 0.2 per cent higher still, the Commerce Department estimated.

In a further sign of better times ahead, factory orders also rose strongly in March – by 1.5 per cent, almost double what had been expected by Wall Street.

For the seventh month running, US industry's backlog of unfilled orders rose, by 1 per cent during the month.

For President Clinton the growth resurgence has come at

a perfect moment. Not only will it strengthen the White House case that the economy is in capable hands as the election approaches, but should also help to dispel public anxieties over jobs and corporate down-sizing.

The one potential area for worry is inflation. While consumer prices are advancing at a modest 2.5 per cent or so, the implicit GDP deflator rose 2.1 per cent in the first three months, up from 1.8 per cent in the last quarter of 1995.

Most of the acceleration reflected a temporary jump in energy prices, but the Fed will be one less watchful for that.

At the very least, a fourth successive cut in short-term rates now looks out of the question. "The overall level of economic activity is going to get people talking about a Fed tightening," Steve Riechert, financial economist for Barclays de Zoete Wedd, commented yesterday.

Body Shop pledges higher payout

NIGEL COPE

Body Shop International took the first steps towards improving its relations with the City yesterday when it announced plans to increase dividend payments to shareholders.

The move is an attempt by founders Gordon and Anita Roddick to offer the pipe of peace to City analysts and institutions that have been frustrated by Body Shop's under-performance and apparent discomfort with the demands of a public company.

It comes just months after the Roddicks abandoned plans to take Body Shop private, a step that would have enabled them to give more money to environmental causes rather than distribute profits to shareholders. To some extent this is an at-

tempt to redress that balance. The company admitted that its dividend yield had been poor and its share price had underperformed the market.

The dividend announcement came as Body Shop reported a 2 per cent fall in pre-tax profits to £32.7m with the Body Shop stores in the US continuing to struggle.

Slipping out the contribution of new stores, sales in America fell by 6 per cent last year due to intense competition and the low level of awareness of the Body Shop brand. "Perhaps we haven't been marketing the way we should," Ms Bawtree said. Though sales have continued to fall since March and are down by 6 per cent, she added that Body Shop had increased spending on promotional

advertising.

Body Shop has 273 stores in America but will open only 14 more this year as it tries to improve the performance of existing outlets.

The performance in the UK stores was better, with sales up slightly but profits flat. The Body Shop direct concept is performing with home delivery offered in 140 of the 252 UK stores. Only five new UK outlets will open this year. Body Shop has also abandoned plans to start an in-store radio station, saying it would be too expensive.

Asia continues to be the growth market, with the 170 stores lifting like-for-like sales 15 per cent. The increased dividend was 3.4p.

Laura Ashley strikes fragrance deal



Laura Ashley, the clothing and furnishing retailer, has struck an exclusive worldwide licensing agreement with L'Oréal for the French cosmetics company to develop and sell fragrances, toiletries and skincare products under the Laura Ashley name.

Ann Iverson, Laura Ashley's chief executive (above), said: "It is a perfect partnership and they give us the advantage of worldwide distribution and considerable marketing expertise."

The products will be sold not only in Laura Ashley shops but through drugstores, department stores and French hypermarkets. News of the deal lifted Ashley's shares almost 3 per cent to 215p.

GUS shocks City with its first profits warning

NIGEL COPE

Great Universal Stores, the mail order giant, stunned investors yesterday when it issued its first profits warning since coming to the stock market in 1984. It blamed lower sales in its home shopping division caused by weaker demand, higher paper costs and the unseasonal weather.

Though the warning was mild, it surprised City analysts who have come to rely on GUS

market expectations of its profits were too high and that its profits for the year to March would be between £57.8m and £58.1m. This was 2 per cent lower than the consensus forecast of £59.5m.

The company insisted that its first ever trading statement was not a "warning" but a "clarification". Richard Pugh, chairman of the group's home shopping division, said: "It is not any sort of warning. We saw

what the forecasts were and felt the market would appreciate us clarifying the position. Some analysts' forecasts had run rather ahead."

He added that, barring unforeseen circumstances, GUS would still report its 48th consecutive year of increased profits when it reports its results in July. Even the lower profits of £57.8m would be higher than 1995's £56.0m.

The company said unaudited

profits for the year to March 1996 indicated a 3.5 per cent increase in group sales with consumer and corporate finance advances up 5 per cent.

The home shopping business in the group, such as the Burberry chain, should show a "satisfactory improvement" in profits, the company said. The company has also collected a lower level of VAT. In previous years the company has received interest payments on VAT overpayments.

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business

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How Brown was transfigured from swan to fall guy

They called him a pig, sneered at his mock-Georgian home and his lifestyle and held him up as the archetype of a greedy capitalist. But despite the constant vilification, Cedric Brown made a dignified exit on Tuesday, his last British Gas annual meeting.

The cynical explanation would of course be that a £247,000-a-year pension is cushion enough against the public pain. But there is another rather older-fashioned reason that may be nearer the truth.

Gas men of his generation felt they had a vocation, even a mission, to fulfil, and it was never primarily to make money. Mr Brown was part of that tradition and it may have helped him survive a notoriety few businessmen can have been forced to experience.

Furthermore, the pay rise that led to his public disgrace may well have been a by-product of badly thought-through boardroom manoeuvrings to get rid of him, rather than the result of aggressive personal avarice.

The gas men's tradition to which Mr Brown belongs is closer to public service than private sector business. His colleagues say that one reason for his relative calm in the face of such hostility is that he has drawn comfort from belonging to a professional community of gas engineers, whose solidarity was a barrier to the cruel media and political world.

It is hard to remember now, but the gas industry and the managers who ran its entrenched regional baronies were the butt of many a bad joke until the late 1960s, for reasons entirely other than greed.

Those great grimy iron gasholders occasionally preserved as monuments to a sulphurous past, were the symbol of all that was nastiest in industry – plants that gobbled



INDUSTRY VIEW
PETER RODGERS

coal and spewed out fumes, smoke and horrible smells that disfigured whole neighbourhoods on the fringes of large towns. That was the generation to which Mr Brown belonged.

In the 1960s, when men such as Mr Brown were rising through the ranks, came natural gas, a clean, cheap fuel that – as well as displacing the old eyesores – turned those running the coal-gas industry into visionaries, of a kind. A huge opportunity presented itself to transform the industry, and with it the reputa-

British industry became swans. Gas men are not the only industrialists with a special tradition that continues to dominate their behaviour, often leaving money in second place as a motivation. The nuclear industry had even odder characteristics, bred, it is said, in the forcing houses of the Windscale (now Sellafield) and Harwell research centres.

One alumnus of Windscale in 1960s describes it vividly as an isolated camp on the wrong side of the Lake District containing hundreds of

thiust about engines, trains and tracks. No wonder rail privatisation has been attacked by the old guard at British Rail. To be a coal or steel man or electricity engineer carried much the same sense of mission.

This public service attitude should certainly never be sneered at. But its deficiencies have been brutally exposed by 15 years of privatisation. Industries run by engineers who were enthusiasts about their products tended to be dreadfully inefficient. BR built its own sleepers, in an attempt to control the system from beginning to end that led to inefficient over-manning.

Sir Denis Cooke at British Gas fought to ensure that that the industry was privatised as a monolith, preserving the nationalised industry structure, and Cedric Brown carried on the fight as chief executive. This policy proved to be a strategic error, and is to be reversed by a demerger planned for next year.

One plausible theory about the events of the last year is that only when the old guard of gas men on the board was reduced to the single lonely figure of Mr Brown did it become possible for the chairman, Richard Giordano, to announce the break-up of the company.

The seeds of Mr Brown's public ignominy probably lay somewhere in the machinations surrounding this change of strategy. Mr Giordano, originally isolated and removed the old guard on the board and announced Mr Brown's early retirement the day he unveiled the demerger.

So how did this notorious pay rise come about? The likeliest explanation is that it was the beginning of a clumsy attempt to per-

Gas men of his generation felt they had a vocation, never chiefly to make money

tions of those who worked in it. One of Mr Brown's most celebrated predecessors at the helm of British Gas in the nationalised industry days, Sir Denis Cooke, found it hard to conceal the fact that the most exciting event in his professional life had been crossing the Atlantic on the first natural gas carrier, the *Methane Pioneer*, delivering an experimental cargo of clean fuel to the UK. He talked like an evangelical preacher who has found energy instead of God,ounding the country selling the concept of a cleaned-up economic gas supply system as a public service. With the discovery of gas in the North Sea that could be piped ashore rather than carried in ships, the ugly ducklings of

male scientists and engineers and hardly a woman, stressed by social isolation and sexual frustration.

In those days, nuclear power was emerging from the intense secrecy of weapons research into the visionary "swords into ploughshares" era of the 1950s and 1960s. Many of the men who led the burgeoning nuclear industry, and whose influence still hangs over it, spent their formative adult years locked up in what was almost a monastery devoted to the mysteries of the atom.

Such zealotry about the product rather than the business was to be found in varying degrees in many other nationalised industries. To be a real railwayman is to be an en-



Survivor from a lost era: Cedric Brown, who retired at British Gas's annual meeting this week

thologist about engines, trains and tracks. No wonder rail privatisation has been attacked by the old guard at British Rail. To be a coal or steel man or electricity engineer carried much the same sense of mission.

This public service attitude should certainly never be sneered at. But its deficiencies have been brutally exposed by 15 years of privatisation. Industries run by engineers who were enthusiasts about their products tended to be dreadfully inefficient. BR built its own sleepers, in an attempt to control the system from beginning to end that led to inefficient over-manning.

Sir Denis Cooke at British Gas fought to ensure that that the industry was privatised as a monolith, preserving the nationalised industry structure, and Cedric Brown carried on the fight as chief executive. This policy proved to be a strategic error, and is to be reversed by a demerger planned for next year.

One plausible theory about the events of the last year is that only when the old guard of gas men on the board was reduced to the single lonely figure of Mr Brown did it become possible for the chairman, Richard Giordano, to announce the break-up of the company.

The seeds of Mr Brown's public ignominy probably lay somewhere in the machinations surrounding this change of strategy. Mr Giordano, originally isolated and removed the old guard on the board and announced Mr Brown's early retirement the day he unveiled the demerger.

So how did this notorious pay rise come about? The likeliest explanation is that it was the beginning of a clumsy attempt to per-

ceive Mr Brown to go quietly and early, while at the same time raising British Gas executive salary levels to the going rate needed to attract the outsiders Mr Giordano wanted to take over running the business. Mr Giordano, famous for years for Britain's highest management salary of more than £1m at BOC, probably had trouble seeing Mr Brown's new pay as being on the high side.

It is certainly true that in the rarefied air of FT-SE 100 boardrooms, Mr Brown's 1993 salary and bonus of £288,000 a year was low and there was a case for raising it, though not by 75 per cent. Furthermore, the share price was declining and his options looked likely to be worthless.

With hindsight it looks as if his departure was on the agenda of some of his colleagues all along, though exactly who was responsible for the idea of the pay and pension increase to smooth the path is hard to pin down. Perhaps they thought it would be less controversial than a big cash pay-off for Mr Brown this year.

Mr Brown, a committed and earnest executive left behind from a lost era of public service, had been brought back into life – at the time of privatisation – into close contact with the wildly overpaid world of investment bankers and mobile industrial chief executives. Who knows, perhaps it never occurred to him that the rest of us would see what he was offered as over the top. The reality is that as Mr Brown's career drew to a close it was his colleagues' manoeuvrings, oot personal greed, that laid the groundwork for his notoriety as a fat cat. Mr Brown looks the fall guy rather than a greedy villain.

Flagging
may be
in Tory
election
plans

Foreign Exchange Rates

Sterling		Dollar		DM	
Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	Spot	1 month
US	9.7	23.29	1000	9.60	23.29
Canada	11.3	50.97	13821	2.1	2.0
Germany	53.46	158.19	15288	26.94	84.81
France	77.67	132.40	405403	57.65	217.07
Italy	124.54	75.90	221.36	156.43	76.44
Japan	158.95	75.70	225.21	104.8	45.44
ECU	122.55	15.11	45.40	122.56	12.55
Belgium	47.29	13.9	31545	6.6	6.5
Denmark	186.93	175.13	529.436	59.10	270.22
Netherlands	2.07	6.69	97.19	174.2	53.32
Ireland	0.9650	2.16	15.63	4.7	12.17
Norway	98.75	16.42	329.23	6.59	42.7
Spain	181.12	28.86	27.69	22.27	22.27
Sweden	10.82	9.15	23.84	6.52	6.52
Switzerland	167.25	66.26	124.89	37.34	37.34
Australia	1.96	2.01	61.71	1.91	1.91
Hong Kong	12.00	1.61	22.73	2.12	2.12
Malta	1.00	0.90	2.44	2.44	2.44
New Zealand	2.78	43.57	14.61	30.32	29.00
Saudi Arabia	5.22	0.40	32.00	2.7	5.14
Singapore	2.07	0.40	14.05	41.30	103.88

Bond Yields		Interest Rates					
Country	5y yield %	10y yield %	30y yield %	Country	5y	10y	30y
UK	8.00%	8.50%	10.00%	Germany	2.50%	3.75%	5.00%
France	3.70%	4.50%	5.00%	US	8.75%	10.00%	12.00%
Italy	8.00%	8.50%	10.00%	Japan	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%
Spain	3.60%	4.00%	4.50%	Belgium	5.00%	5.50%	6.00%
Sweden	3.00%	3.50%	4.00%	UK	2.50%	3.00%	3.50%
Switzerland	3.00%	3.50%	4.00%	Denmark	3.00%	3.50%	4.00%
Australia	2.70%	3.00%	3.50%	Denmark	3.00%	3.50%	4.00%
Hong Kong	2.70%	3.00%	3.50%	Denmark	3.00%	3.50%	4.00%
Malta	2.70%	3.00%	3.50%	Denmark	3.00%	3.50%	4.00%
New Zealand	2.70%	3.00%	3.50%	Denmark	3.00%	3.50%	4.00%
Singapore	2.70%	3.00%	3.50%	Denmark	3.00%	3.50%	4.00%

Money Market Rates		Interest Rates					
Country	7 day	5 day	3 day	1 day	30 day	90 day	1 year
UK	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%
US	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%
Canada	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%
Germany	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%
France	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%
Italy	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%
Spain	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%
Sweden	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%
Switzerland	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%
Australia	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%
Hong Kong	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%
Malta	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%
New Zealand	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%
Singapore	6.75%	6.75%</td					



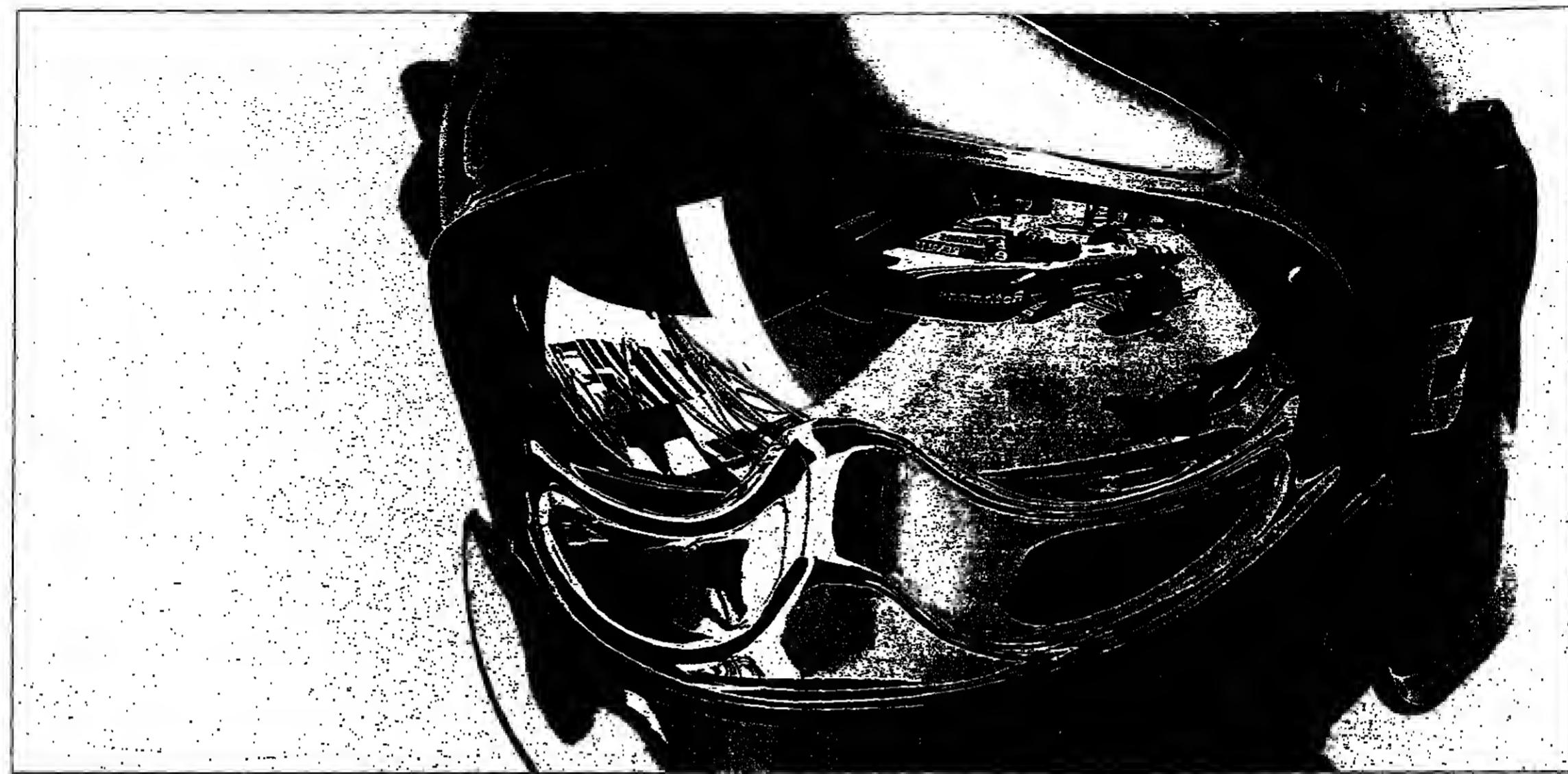
THE INDEPENDENT

PLAY FORMULA 1 DREAM TEAM



GRAND PRIX '96 RACE SCHEDULE

San Marino GP
May 5
Monaco GP
May 19
Spanish GP
June 2
Canadian GP
June 16
French GP
June 30
British GP
July 14
German GP
July 28
Hungarian GP
August 11
Belgian GP
August 25
Italian GP
September 8
Portuguese GP
September 22
Japanese GP
October 13



WIN a drive in a Grand Prix car

Formula 1 Dream Team is just like Fantasy Football: you pick and manage your dream grand prix team to score points over the coming season.

Even though the grand prix season has started, it is not too late to join in pit your wits against other enthusiasts and you could win our overall 1996 champion's prize, a drive in a Formula One car plus additional points for each race.

Your team must comprise three drivers, a chassis and an engine; your budget is £40 million.

Make your selections from the grand prix shopping list printed below; the only restriction is that your third driver must come from the £1 million category.

Details of how to enter are given on this page. You can enter a team at any point during the grand prix season but the earlier you enter, the greater your chance of being our overall champion. Remember, there are prizes for the winning Dream Team in each individual grand prix so you can enter a different team for each race.

HOW YOU SCORE
Points are awarded per race to the top six finishers, based on the Formula One World Championship points scoring system (10, 6, 4, 3, 2, 1) but with an extra 10 points awarded to each of the top six finishers.

All drivers are eligible to score for a top six finish but can also notch up extra points as follows:

- The fastest driver in race-day warm-up will collect six points, with five for the second and so on down to one point for the sixth quickest.
- Drivers score one point for each place they make up over their grid position. Points are not deducted by losing places.
- Five points are lost if your driver posts first retirement, four for second down to one point lost for the fifth retirement.
- If your driver makes the quickest pit-stop (from the entry of the pitlane to the exit) you gain five points.
- If your driver sets the fastest lap time in the race, you gain five points.
- If your driver receives a stop/go penalty, you lose five points.
- If your driver starts on pole position, you gain five points.
- The Independent will name a Driver of the Day after each race for a particularly impressive performance, worth five points.

Non-qualification for a grand prix loses you two points. If a driver is on the FIA's published starting grid but fails to take the start, no points are lost. Drivers removed from the results for any reason lose all points gained that weekend. Any driver not competing in a grand prix weekend scores no points.

Chassis score and lose points in the same way as drivers for a top six finish or any early retirement. The score is based on the first chassis home of that particular manufacturer. Likewise, only the first chassis retirement will count if they are both among the first five to retire.

Engine rules are the same as the chassis rules, without the retirement penalties.



DREAM TEAM TOP PRIZE

The Dream Team manager with the highest number of points at the end of the Grand Prix Championship season will win our top prize - a drive in a 650bhp F1 car. You will be flown to the AGS team's training school in the south of France for the most exhilarating experience of your life. The school specialises in F1 courses and provides all the racewear and instruction you will need for the day.

SAN MARINO GRAND PRIX PRIZE

The Dream Team manager with the highest number of points following the San Marino Grand Prix will win a VIP trip for two to the French Grand Prix on 30 June.

European Grand Prix Prize Winner

Congratulations to Andrew Pike from London with his team AWP Grand Prix Racing. He has won our trip for two to the Spanish Grand Prix on June 2.

HOW TO ENTER

Choose your Dream Team from the shopping list on this page. Remember, you must choose three drivers (the third from the £1 million section), one chassis and one engine. You must not exceed your budget of £40 million.

Give your team a name and register it by ringing 0891 891 805.

You will immediately be asked the entry question: How many races are there in this year's Formula One World Championship?

To enter your Dream Team details you can use one of two methods.

Method 1 uses a tone phone that lets you key in the code numbers of your driver, chassis and engine choices. The computer will check that your team falls within budget and is eligible.

Method 2 uses a one-tone phone and give your details verbally. A budget check is not possible using this method.

When you have registered your Dream Team, you will be asked to predict the number of points this year's champion will notch up over the year.

In case of a tie at the end of the season, the nearest figure to the champion's points will win the top prize. In the event of a further tie, the team that registered first will win.

Once you have registered your team you will be asked for your name, address and telephone number. Your team selections plus your personal details will be played back to you and, when you confirm that they are correct, you will be given a PIN number.

This is confirmation of your entry and will enable you to access the score checking line.

There is no limit on the number of teams an individual can enter, but only one team can be registered per call.

CHECKING YOUR SCORE

You can check your team's position at any time by calling 0891 891 806 and quoting your PIN number. If you want to know the individual driver, chassis and engine scores from the most recent race, call 0891 891 807. This line will also list the Top 50 Formula One Dream Teams.

Rules

1. All telephone calls are charged at 39p per minute cheap rate, 49p per minute at all other times, with a typical call to score your entry lasting between five and seven minutes.

2. The deadline to be included in a particular race is midday the Friday prior to that race.

3. The judge's decision is final, no correspondence will be entered into and there is no cash alternative for prizes.

4. Employees of Newspaper Publishing Ltd and all associated companies and their families are ineligible.

5. Entrants must be 18 or over and residents of the UK or the Irish Republic.

6. To be eligible for the main prize, you must hold a current driving licence, be no more than 1.95m tall and weigh no more than 220lbs.

7. All scores will be worked out according to the official FIA time sheets produced at the meeting. The values stated for drivers, engines and chassis bear on relation to real life.

8. In the event of a tie for the Dream Team Top Prize or for any of the individual race prizes, the team that registered first will win.

9. For lost PIN numbers, call 0891 891 808. Helpline: 01275 344183.

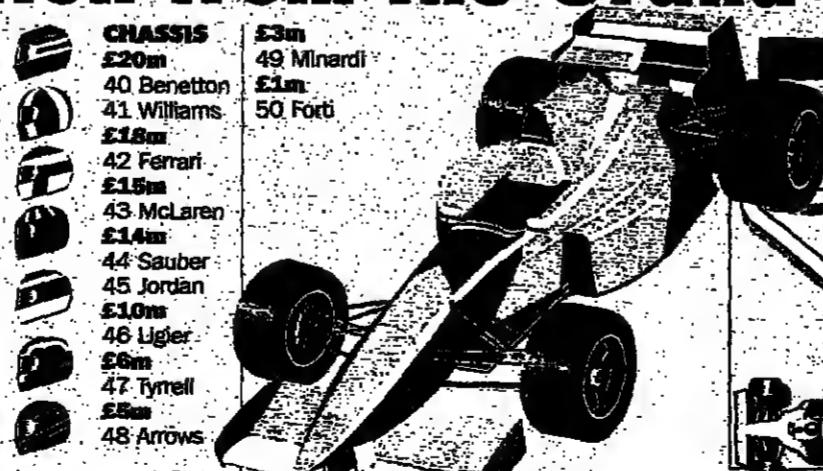
10. The Top 50 Teams Line, lists the top 50 teams from the last race. Both the Team Position Check Line and the Results & Top 50 Teams Line will be updated at 2 pm on the Monday following a race.

Make your selection from the Grand Prix Shopping List

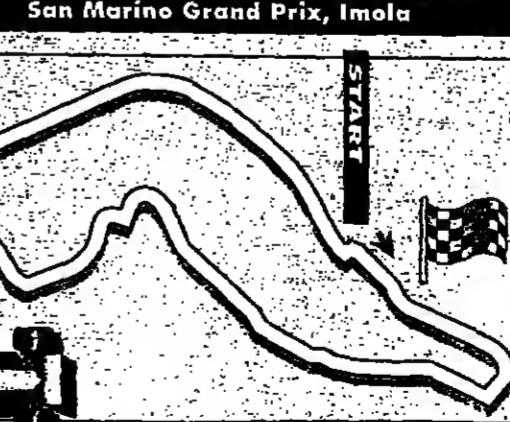
DRIVERS	£0m
225m	13 M Sato
1 M Schumacher	14 P Lam
222m	15 P Diziz
2 J Alesi	16 U Katayama
3 D Hill	17 J Verstappen
220m	18 O Panis
4 G Berger	19 L Badoer
218m	20 R Rosset
5 D Coulthard	21 A Montoyra
6 E Irvine	22 G Fisichella
7 J Villeneuve	23 V Sospini
8 M Hakkinen	24 T Marques
9 H H Frentzen	25 F Latorre
10m	26 H Noda
10 M Brundle	27 T Inoue
11 R Barrichello	
12 J Herbert	

CHASSIS	£3m
£28m	49 Minardi
40 Benetton	£3m
41 Williams	50 Forti
£18m	
42 Ferrari	
43 McLaren	
44 Sauber	
45 Jordan	
510m	
46 Ligier	
52m	
47 Tyrrell	
53m	
48 Arrows	

*Not competing in the San Marino GP but may compete later.



San Marino Grand Prix, Imola



TEAM POSITION CHECK LINE: 0891 891 806
RESULTS & TOP 50 TEAMS LINE: 0891 891 807

DREAM TEAM registration: 0891 891 805 ENTER TODAY

Play Formula 1
Dream Team

Riyad
Godolphin
racing

100

TONY ARBOT

3930 108
NEWTON
HAMILTON
N. ABBOT
BANGOR
SEGUIN

Riyadian to cool Godolphin fervour

Racing

GREG WOOD

The average racing mind is not noted for its openness, but perhaps, as the Millenium approaches, we are growing just a little more liberal. Five years ago, the idea that the two main races at Newmarket this afternoon might be won by horses which had spent the winter in the Middle East would have seemed laughable. In 1996, however, the only surprise is not that such a thing is possible, but that everyone accepts it as part of the natural course of events.

Mick's Love, in the Newmarket Stakes, and Moonshell, last year's Oaks winner, in the Jockey Club Stakes, will give British racegoers their first sight of the Godolphin team this year, and what few hints there have been so far imply that their runners are every bit as fit and healthy after their winter in the sun as in seasons past. Mark Of Esteem, Godolphin's representative in the 2,000 Guineas tomorrow, started to shrink in the ante-post betting from the moment his plane touched

down. From a general 10-1, he was 8-1 before he retrieved his luggage, and as short as 6-1 by the time he reached customs.

Should either of today's principal Godolphin runners succeed, the run on Mark Of Esteem will turn into a headlong charge. While both will go to

RICHARD EDMONDSON
NAP: Flash in the Pan
(Hamilton 4.30)
NB: Touch Silver
(Newton Abbot 1.50)

post with realistic chances, they also face rivals who should have the beating of them.

Moonshell is worth opposing under her Group One penance, and the choice here is Riyadian (next best 3.40). Paul Cole's colt had an unhappy run in the Derby last year, but returned to win two back-end races before running second to Spectrum in the Champion Stakes. Over a more suitable 12 furlongs today, he will be very hard to beat.

Mick's Love was the convincing winner last year of a conditions event at Newbury which often uncovers a top-class per-

former. Clever Cliche (3.05), by contrast, has won only a Nottingham maiden, but he did so despite finding trouble in running and shortly after being supplemented to the Derby for £8,000. If Henry Cecil thinks he is worth that sort of outlay, who are we to argue.

Ladbrokes certainly seem to concur, quoting Clever Cliche at a very respectful 14-1 for the Derby, but such hefty late-entry fees might soon be outmoded if Epsom racecourse get their way. The executive would like to introduce a "wild-card" entry scheme for the Derby, which would allow one horse each year to run in the race even though his trainer had omitted to enter him – last year, for instance, Pepple might have been a popular choice.

The proposal seems to have come as a surprise to the British Horseracing Board, however. "This is news to me," John Snee, responsible for race planning, said yesterday. "This would need a lot of discussion as it is a whole new concept." Translation: don't hold your breath.

Anti-post betting would surely suffer if such a system were introduced, with punters reluctant to get involved when a new favourite could appear just before the race.

Some would argue that anything which discourages anti-post betting must be in the backer's favour and any spare cash today would be better invested on EXPENSIVE TASTE (nap 2.35). Michael Stoute's filly may prove to be above handicap company, and has surely been let in a few pounds light

to competition from the Lottery – had produced a deficit of revenue of £5.1m. That necessitates a provisional allocation of prize-money for next year of £28.5m, £1.4m down on 1995. "Hopefully the effect of the Lottery will work itself out after it has been in existence for one and a half to two years," Sparrow said.

Lottery hits Levy revenue

Tristram Ricketts, chief executive of the BHB, yesterday described the Levy Board's provisional 4.7% cut in its prize-money contribution for 1997 as "a matter of grave concern".

The Levy Board's chairman, Sir John Sparrow, said that the decline in off-course betting turnover – attributable largely

to competition from the Lottery – had produced a deficit of revenue of £5.1m. That necessitates a provisional allocation of prize-money for next year of £28.5m, £1.4m down on 1995. "Hopefully the effect of the Lottery will work itself out after it has been in existence for one and a half to two years," Sparrow said.

NEWTON ABBOT

HYPERION
1.50 Touch Silver 2.25 Alto George 2.55 Roffe
3.30 All For Luck 4.05 Daily Sport Girl 4.40 Air
Shot 5.10 Dace

GOING: Soft (Good in Soft in places).
■ Left-hand, sharp, course with short run-ups.

■ Blinks: None. Turn of the Year on the Newmarket Abbot station a mile and a half. ADMISSION: General, 50-50. Courses 4-6. Accompanied under 16s. CAR PARK: On rails 5.16d, refreshments free.

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sport

Petchey hoping to lay Cup ghosts

Tennis

JOHN ROBERTS
reports from Newcastle

Tim Henman's illness has placed Mark Petchey in the Davis Cup firing line against Slovenia at Newcastle today, or, as Britain's captain David Lloyd prefers, it has given the Essex man "a great chance to put behind him some of the ghosts he's had in singles".

The last spectre was Razvan Sabau, a 17-year-old Romanian ranked below 700, who was twice a set down to Petchey on a grass court in Manchester two years ago but recovered to win the final rubber, completing Britain's most humiliating defeat.

Petchey's solitary victory in nine Davis Cup singles matches was accomplished in Manchester in 1991 against Thomas Muster - the Austrian clay-court specialist who won his first senior match on grass in a Davis Cup tie in South Africa in February this year, four days before

reaching No 1 in the world.

Today, on a fast indoor carpet, Petchey, originally selected for doubles, faces the Slovenian No 1, Iztok Bozic, ranked 216 places below him at No 419. Before then, Lloyd trusts, the big-serving Greg Rusedski will have given his team a winning start against the Slovenian No 2, Borut Urh, ranked 478.

For tomorrow's doubles, Rusedski has taken Petchey's place alongside Neil Broad - a partnership born in Canada and South Africa - against Urh and Gregor Krusic, who just about jogs the singles computer at No 1,257.

Should the Euro-African Zone Group II tie still be five on Sunday, Petchey contests the final rubber against Urh after Rusedski has played Bozic.

Petchey, while sympathising with Henman, views his promotion as an opportunity rather than an ordeal. "It's nice to get another chance, and I'm looking forward to it," he said. "It's different for me now. I'm coming on the team now as a doubles player and as a No 3 singles player in case someone gets sick. I hope I play to the way I've been practising."

Lloyd hopes so, too, having given his brother, John, the team coach, the task of relaxing Petchey for his return to singles. "I think a lot of people watching us practise might think we are not taking it seriously, but we are taking it very seriously," Lloyd said. "It's very important for Mark to feel relaxed, because he's a very tight person and in the past has tended to tense up on his serve a bit."

Today: Rusedski v Urh; Petchey v Bozic. Tomorrow: Rusedski and Broad v Urh and Krusic. Sunday: Rusedski v Bozic; Petchey v Urh.

CRICKET: Yorkshire's openers undefeated as bad weather causes disjointed start to the County Championship

Run deluge for Vaughan and Moxon

DEREK HODGSON

reports from Cardiff
Yorkshire 316-0 v Glamorgan

was a raw day, under sultry cloud, to bowl or field.

When 15 runs came off the first seven deliveries Glamorgan sensed what to expect. Moxon was in fine fettle straight away, going on the back foot to hammer huge off-drives. Once Steve Watkin had found his rhythm with the wind, he gave the 21-year-old Vaughan a vigorous examination, helping confine him to 11 runs in the first 17 overs.

But the runs flowed, and

Glamorgan tried six bowlers in the morning but without Ottis Gibson, who has a groin strain, and Roland Lefebvre, retired, the attack is over dependent upon the invincible Watkin and helpful conditi

ons. A near run-out, by a throw from Steve James, and two nicks that dropped short of the slips, were their only encouragement all day.

Robert Croft tried to contain the pair, which was hard work, as Moxon reached his 43rd century in the 63rd over, Vaughan reached his century, his fourth, in the 71st.

After tea, after three dashing cover drives off Adrian Dale in one over, Vaughan swept past his previous career best, 117 at Luton in 1994, and was first past over 263 balls in 23 fours.

Moxon had hit 18 fours and the pair were eight runs short of the record when bad light ended play 10 overs early.

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Thorpe struck painful blow



Paul Weekes, of Middlesex, is leg before Gloucestershire's Mark Alleyne at Lord's yesterday

Photograph: Graham Chadwick/Allsport

New Zealand's ambition stifled by Ambrose

TONY COZIER

reports from St John's, Antigua
West Indies 548-7 dec & 184
New Zealand 437 and 46-3

New Zealand quickly had to abandon optimistic hopes of an unlikely victory in the second and final Test yesterday when they lost three wickets in pursuit of a target of 296 in 73 overs.

Curly Ambrose claimed Roger Twose in the fifth over before lunch and then appeared lucky to gain umpire Lloyd Barker's belated decision for a catch at the wicket that accounted for Craig Spearman.

New Zealand's chances were effectively erased when Nathan Astle, coming off two successive hundreds, was caught low down at cover by Jimmy Adams in Phil Simmons' first over.

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Thorpe struck painful blow

The Surrey and England batsman Graham Thorpe was taken to hospital for a precautionary X-ray after being struck just above the right elbow by a rising delivery from Somerset's Andrew van Troost at Taunton yesterday.

Thorpe was clearly in consider-

able pain, but returned later to report nothing more serious than severe bruising. "I simply didn't pick the ball up," he said.

"The arm will be a bit stiff in the morning, but I should be able to bat." Only 113 overs were possible, with Surrey on 34 for 2.

Jason Lanyon scored his maiden first-class century for Hampshire against Oxford University in The Parks, but England's Robin Smith managed just one scoring stroke - a streaky edge for two - in 15 balls before missing a square cut to third man.

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able pain, but returned later to report nothing more serious than severe bruising. "I simply didn't pick the ball up," he said.

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SPORT

FOOTBALL: Venables gives backing to his successor but refuses to rule himself out of a return to Lancaster Gate

Hoddle realises grand ambition

GLENN MOORE
Football Correspondent

He arrived by car, along the Bayswater Road, not by walking across the Serpentine, but Glenn Hoddle carried a conviction upon his appointment as England coach yesterday that suggests he believes miracles will not be required.

The 38-year-old made his bow with the same grace and economy that characterised his playing career. Faced with an audience of more than 100 reporters, 50 cameramen and 13 television crews Hoddle looked as if he has been preparing to lead England all his life.

Which is not surprising, because he has: "I have had a burning ambition to do this since I was a very young age," he said at his unveiling in a hotel near Hyde Park. "It is the only job in England or abroad, which I would have left Chelsea for."

He has signed a four-year contract, estimated at close to £300,000 a year, which starts on 1 June. He will not, however, be actively involved with the England squad until after Euro '96. Terry Venables, understandably, wants the team to concentrate exclusively on the championships. The first scheduled fixture for Hoddle is a World Cup qualifier, away to Moldova, on 1 September.

Hoddle put an end to months of speculation and two days of indecision on Wednesday night. Having first been approached by Jimmy Armfield, the Football Association's adviser, some weeks ago, he was offered the job on Tuesday. Graham Kelly, the FA's chief executive, refused to go into detail about the timing of the offer, but it seems clear that Hoddle was spoken to before his club. Though his contract has less than a month to run, it was not the ideal way for the FA to go about the appointment even if they did not directly contravene any regulation.

The raising of this subject at yesterday's press conference clearly irked Kelly, but Hoddle, who sat between Kelly and Venables, seemed unconcerned. In general he looked relaxed but wary. No different, in fact, to his approach when dealing with the media after Chelsea matches.

Hoddle said: "It is a privilege and an honour. That is why I took it. My ambition is to be successful, the talent is there. There is a crop of exciting young play-

ers coming through which gives me the chance to do well. I want to do so in a manner which is close to my heart and, I believe, close to the public's as well."

Hoddle said the appointment would be "the pinnacle of any management career". His own started at 17, when he coached an Essex Sunday league side while still an apprentice at Tottenham. The experience, he said later, was useful but it was frustrating trying to explain ideas to players not good enough to understand them.

The same problem appeared to dog his early days at Chelsea but, this time, he will be dealing with players capable of putting his ideas into practice. Not only will they be the best the country had to offer, they have already been directed towards a more accomplished style by Venables.

"Terry's work has been a major influence in my taking over," Hoddle said. "It would have been wrong to come in if the tactics had been totally different. That would have been too drastic a change."

The way Terry has been playing has been very brave at times. He knows exactly what he wants and the team now know what he wants. For me it is very exciting, the last two performances have been superb."

"Sometimes we admire what goes on across the channel and then raise eyebrows if we do it over here. I think people will accept it if we win."

Kelly confirmed: "We have pre-arranged continuity and we believe Glenn has similar football philosophies to Terry. He believes in intelligent players and raising the sophistication level of England players. Like Terry he is keen to bring players through the system playing a similar way throughout the teams, from youth to senior level."

Venables warmly approved Hoddle's appointment. "I coached him when he was in the under-21's and he was always keen to look at new things even then. I have got had much contact since but, when I had a meeting with the managers whose clubs had been in Europe we got talking and it was obvious we had thoughts along the same lines."

"I have said that I think it is an older man's job but that is a rule of thumb. When you begin talking about personalities, and about Glenn, I would say it is a good choice. He has experience

abroad – and had it under a very good coach [Arsene Wenger at Monaco]. He has good football knowledge and is possibly one of the best players this country has ever had."

Hoddle returned the compliment by suggesting that, had Venables been England manager when he was playing, "he would have brought the best out of me". He also addressed the question of his own experience – he is 38, has been a manager for just five years, has not gained the FA's own coaching badge and has only won a pro-

motion through the play-offs. "I think the experience I've gained through management and as a player has been invaluable," Hoddle said. "It did not feel ready for the job I would not have taken it. In this country experience is sometimes judged by grey hairs but that is not necessarily the case."

Hoddle will be back at work today, preparing Chelsea for Sunday's match with Blackburn Rovers. He intends to say a special goodbye to the supporters then – "it was heart-rending to leave," he added.

Then he will appoint his back-room staff – no clues as yet, but they are unlikely to include Venables' current assistant, Bryan Robson, who may be viewed as too much of an equal to Hoddle – and begin studying England's World Cup opponents and following their Euro '96 campaign.

His task will be hard enough without great expectations be-

ing placed upon him. "If I was worried about the media scrutiny I would not have taken the job," he said. "Obviously it is a concern but it is up to me to deal with it. It is not a reason to turn the job down."

Then, with the cameras about to stop clicking and whirring, there was an intriguing postscript. Asked if he would one day like to return to coaching England, Venables said: "Yes, of course, I have made it very clear that I enjoyed it. There have been difficult times but it is a privilege. If the chance came, I will consider it seriously – but not for four years."

That time is for Hoddle to make his mark. He will be 42 by then. Will he put a fresh trophy line to Lancaster Gate, or will he only have a head of grey hair to show for it? Wish him luck, for he will need good fortune as much as good judgement.

More football, page 27

Rund Gullit yesterday put himself in the frame to take over as the manager of Chelsea by declaring that he will not follow Glenn Hoddle into the England set-up.

The inspirational Dutchman, who was a free transfer signing from Sampdoria last summer, intends to complete the remaining year of his contract.

"I will be staying," the 33-year-old Gullit said. "Chelsea want to continue playing the way we played this year. I will play as long as I enjoy it. That is my priority."

He added: "It's a great opportunity which does not come often. I'm happy for him as a person,

even though it's a bit sad for Chelsea. If he had been going to another club, it would have been different."

Gullit wants to turn Sunday's final game against Blackburn, into a farewell party – for himself and the Chelsea fans.

"I'd like to think there wouldn't be a party," he said. "I'll be in training tomorrow and looking forward to preparing the site."

Colin Hutchinson, Chelsea's managing director, was "delighted for Glenn" but described his departure as a sad loss for Chelsea. "It is a very emotional time," he said. "He has been an absolute joy to work with and we're all a bit down."

Martin Howlett, of Throckley, Newcastle, said: "He wasn't the first choice by any means but I think a lot of people will be happy with his appointment."

"I feel that England should have done everything to keep Terry Venables, because he was an excellent coach but I'm delighted that it's not Kevin Keegan, who the FA wanted."

Kevin Smith, of Newburn, added: "If he gets off on the right foot and puts a good run together, I'm sure he'll do well. At least he will have the London press on his side."

Ian Morrice, of Ponteland, said: "I'm just delighted that the name of Kevin Keegan is off everyone's lips. He's not really had a lot of experience but what he's done he seems to have done very well."

"It's a demanding job though and I'm sure there will be times when he wishes he was on holiday in Florida."

Fans are quick to express support

Glenn Hoddle's appointment as successor to Terry Venables was given widespread approval by spectators at the City Ground last night for the Premier League match between Nottingham Forest and Newcastle United.

The prevailing view among supporters at the game was that with so many leading candidates raising themselves out of the reckoning, the FA could hardly have done better in hiring the Chelsea manager.

Ian White, of Nottingham, thought so. He said: "Many people have cried off in terms of being interested in the job that the FA have come up with an excellent choice."

"I'm delighted that someone with his beliefs on how the game should be played has got the chance of managing England."

"As a player everything revolved around his tremendous passing ability, and I'm sure that he will take that philosophy with him into his new role."

"Whether he has got the necessary experience remains to be seen and I'm sure a lot will depend on how he handles press relations. But he appears to be an extremely nice chap and intelligent enough to carry it through."

Percy Simmons, of London, reinforced the view: "If the England team play like he did I don't think too many people will complain."

"He had tremendous flair and over the last 20 years or so there have not been many players with his talent."

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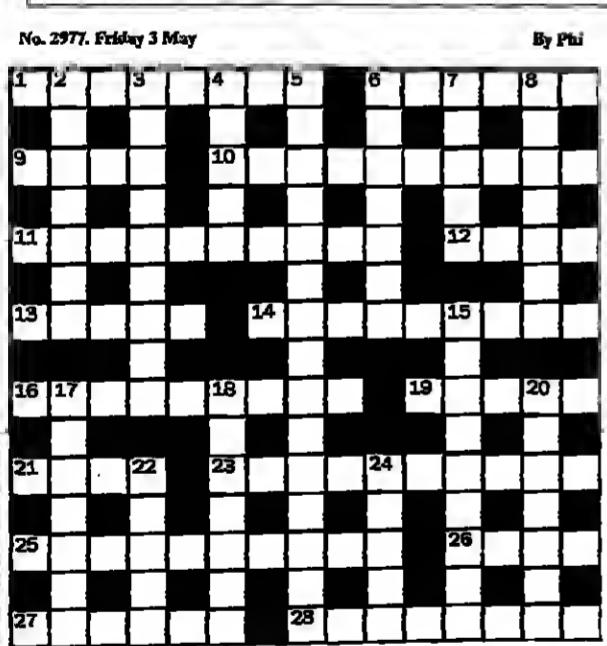


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